Parent stories of HIPPY: The role of a school readiness program for newcomer families in supporting parent-child relationships

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Abstract

The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program (HIPPY) is a school readiness program for parents with preschool-aged children. This study examines Multicultural HIPPY, a branch of HIPPY in Canada that supports newcomer families. Research on HIPPY has focused mainly on the impact of HIPPY on children's school achievement. This study fills a gap in the literature by exploring parents' experiences of parent-child bonding in HIPPY. Ten mothers from across Canada were interviewed about their experiences in the program. Across all interviews, mothers described a sense of increased parent-child closeness through participating in HIPPY. This occurred through several pathways: increased parent-child quality time, warm and responsive parent-child interaction, positive shared experiences between parent and child, and reduced parent stress. These findings reveal that Multicultural HIPPY not only supports newcomer families through improved school readiness and community connections, but through building stronger family ties.

Keywords: HIPPY, newcomers, parent-child relationships, parenting, school readiness, mental health

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List of Acronyms

HIPPY   Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

SES   Socioeconomic status

Glossary

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	A home-based, early intervention program for mothers with preschool aged children. The program's primary goal is to increase school readiness among vulnerable populations. It is offered in many cities across Canada.
Home visitor	An employee of HIPPY who visits the family home once per week, providing educational materials and instructions for the mother to use with her child. One home visitor is assigned to each family in HIPPY. They are typically mothers who have participated in HIPPY themselves, meaning they often share similar life and cultural experiences with the family.
Mothers Matter Centre	A non-profit organisation based out of Vancouver that "empowers socially isolated and economically vulnerable mothers," particularly newcomer, refugee, and Indigenous mothers, with the goal of supporting mothers and their children (Mothers Matter Center, 2019). It oversees all of the HIPPY programs in Canada.

Chapter 1.   Introduction

This study sought to explore parents' experiences of the parent-child relationship in the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program, commonly referred to as HIPPY. HIPPY is an early-intervention, school readiness program for preschool-aged children. It exists in ten countries around the world and supports families with children who are considered educationally at-risk due to reasons such as low socioeconomic status (SES) and social isolation. HIPPY's main objective is to close the gap in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged children by working with parents, primarily mothers, under the guiding belief that a mother is their child's "first and most important teacher" (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). HIPPY assigns a home visitor to each participating family, who comes to the home once per week and provides five 15-20 minute educational activities for parents to complete with their child over the following week. In Canada, there are two branches of the program: Indigenous HIPPY and Multicultural HIPPY. This study examines Multicultural HIPPY only, which works specifically with newcomer families.

HIPPY is an evidence-based program. It is supported by decades of research that has found HIPPY participation to result in improved school functioning among children (e.g., Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Brown & Lee, 2017; Johnson et al., 2012; Nievar et al., 2018; Payne et al., 2020) and increased social connectivity among parents (e.g., Barnett et al. 2012; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Liddell et al., 2009; Liddell et al., 2011; Nathans et al., 2020; Nievar, 2018). Clearly, HIPPY is frequently meeting its goals in improving the lives of parents and children. However, less is known about the impacts of HIPPY on parent-child relationships. This is surprising given that HIPPY promotes school readiness through encouraging daily parent-child interaction and play.

Parent-child relationships are important to study in relation to HIPPY participation because they have long lasting implications for child development. Early parent-child relationships provide the foundation for children's relational development, which subsequently influences their emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being (Bretherton, 1997; Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; McWilliams & Bailey, 2010; Sroufe, 2005; Thompson, 2015). Close and supportive parent-child relationships are optimal for development and

build resilience in children (Sroufe, 2005; Thompson, 2015). Based on the routine that HIPPY creates of spending frequent time together on child-centred activities, it is possible that this is strengthening parent-child relationships and playing a role in the program's success. This idea has not yet been fully explored in the HIPPY literature and this study aims to fill this gap.

In conducting this study, I wanted to understand if and how parents perceived HIPPY as impacting their relationships with their children. I also wanted to understand if and how parents perceived HIPPY as impacting them as a parent (e.g., if it changed any of their parenting behaviours, attitudes, or values), as this could speak to changes in the parent-child relationship. Finally, I wanted to understand if and how parents perceived HIPPY as impacting their child (e.g., what types of changes have they noticed in their child), as this could also reflect changes to the parent-child relationship. The primary research question is: how do parents make meaning of their participation in HIPPY as it relates to the parent-child relationship?

To answer this question, I conducted semi-structured interviews with ten mothers across Canada who had participated in Multicultural HIPPY at various sites within the last two years. Participants were encouraged to provide stories and examples as they were asked about how HIPPY impacted their relationships with their children, how HIPPY impacted them as parents, and how HIPPY impacted their children. I was guided by episodic narrative interviewing, a method that aims to gather stories about participants' lived experiences related to a particular phenomenon (Mueller, 2019). This approach is based in the belief that humans make sense of their experiences through stories, and therefore aims to "naturalise" the research process (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 162). Interviews were transcribed and analysed for common themes.

The purpose of this study is to explore parents' experiences of connecting to their child through Multicultural HIPPY, and therefore fill a gap in the HIPPY literature. Greater insight on the connection between HIPPY and parent-child relationships could highlight an important area of the program that has not yet been fully acknowledged, or identify areas for program development. Previous research has found that HIPPY is already fostering resilience among newcomer families through improved academic achievement in children and improved social support for mothers, but it will be useful to know if and

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how HIPPY is strengthening parent-child relationships, as this could further promote newcomer family well-being.

Chapter 2.   Literature review

In this chapter I provide background information on the topic of study: the role of a school readiness program for newcomer families in supporting parent-child relationships. I first describe the importance of school readiness and how it is developed. I then provide an overview of HIPPY and review existing research on the program, which reveals an important gap. That is, little has been documented on HIPPY's influence on parent-child relationships. To provide background for this focus of the thesis, I outline the significance of parent-child relationships for child development through the lens of Bowlby and Ainsworth's theory of attachment (Bretherton, 1992) and Baumrind's theory of parenting styles (Baumrind, 2013). In the final section I review the influence of social and cultural contexts on parent-child relationships, and explore these considerations for newcomer children and families using the framework of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986).

2.1. School readiness

School readiness refers to the skills and experiences that teachers expect children to have upon arrival to kindergarten, their first formal education. School readiness encompasses physical health (e.g., adequate rest and nutrition), basic academic competencies (e.g., pre-reading and pre-math skills), cognitive ability to learn (e.g., memory and attention), social-emotional skills (e.g., emotion regulation and empathy), motor skills (e.g., holding a pencil), and ability to care for oneself (e.g., cleaning and dressing) (Duncan et al., 2007; Hollingsworth & Winter, 2013; Lewit & Baker, 1995; Pekdoğan and Akgül, 2016; Welsh et al., 2010). While there are different opinions as to which elements are most necessary for readiness, it is generally agreed that a combination of these competencies set students up to learn and thrive alongside their peers at school (Lewit & Baker, 1995; Pekdoğan and Akgül, 2016). A large body of research demonstrates that school readiness is predictive of important short and long-term benefits for children, including an easier transition to school, greater academic achievement throughout their years in school, and a greater likelihood of attending post-secondary education and obtaining high-skilled employment as adults (Duncan et al., 2007; Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000).

On the other hand, children without the opportunity to learn these skills are at a disadvantage (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Developmentally, they begin kindergarten behind their peers, and attending school alone is often not enough for them to catch up (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Further, this difference in school achievement is likely to remain or increase as they get older, creating additional challenges (Anders et al., 2012; Ramey & Ramey, 2004). For instance, students who are behind are more likely to disengage from school, display disruptive behaviour in the classroom, be held back a grade, be placed in special education, and not complete highschool (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Moreover, an incomplete highschool education is associated with lower SES, substance abuse, and increased illegal behaviour, posing a range of challenges for these individuals, as well as for teachers and communities (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

2.1.1. Socio-cultural barriers to school readiness

Unfortunately, there are consistent gaps in school readiness among certain populations. Risk factors include low SES, low parent formal education, poor parent health, being born to teenage parents, speaking a different first language than the language of instruction or having a parent who speaks a different first language than the language of instruction, and being an immigrant or child of immigrants (Anders et al., 2012; Briceno et al., 2013; Browne et al., 2018; Janus & Duku, 2007; Lahaie, 2008; 2010). Many of these risk factors are interrelated as well. For example, newcomers are likely to have low SES when first arriving to Canada due to socio-cultural barriers in acquiring employment (Guo, 2009), and those with low SES are more likely to be in poor health due to living conditions and cost of healthcare and nutrition (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

These groups are at a greater risk of low school readiness because they may have limited access to resources and face unique barriers to being involved in their child's education. For example, parents with low SES may be unable to afford educational items and supplies, have less time to engage in educational activities due to inflexible work schedules, and lack reliable transportation to attend educational programs (Antony-Neuman, 2019; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Lahaie, 2008). Newcomer

parents specifically may lack information about the local education system and face language and cultural barriers (Antony-Neuman, 2019). Some parents may also feel uncomfortable interacting with teachers due to insecurities about their level of knowledge and understanding (Moles, 1993). Parents with low SES also experience higher levels of stress due to factors such as financial concern, neighbourhood risk, or uncertainty about the future, which can lead to negative emotional states that impact family relationships and parents' ability to recognize and respond to their child's needs (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Browne et al., 2018). On top of this, these families face barriers in acquiring optimal nutrition, health care, and housing for their families, impacting physical and mental well-being, including parents' mental capacity to teach and children's mental capacity to learn (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Poverty in particular increases the risk of children spending time in unfavourable environments and facing adverse childhood experiences, further impacting their physical and mental health (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Winter & Kelley, 2008). As a result, many children start kindergarten at a disadvantage.

Of course, there is variation among families. Characteristics such as SES and minority status play a role in predicting school readiness, though they do not predict school readiness alone (Anders et al., 2012; Melhuish et al., 2008). The home learning environment is a more powerful predictor of school readiness and does not necessarily correlate to SES and other demographic factors (Anders et al., 2012; Melhuish et al., 2008).

2.1.2. Facilitating school readiness

A child's environment largely shapes their development (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Thus, school readiness is fostered by providing children with safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environments in the home and the community, starting in infancy (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In fact, the home learning environment predicts children's school achievement well beyond other demographic factors (Melhuish et al., 2008).

The home learning environment

Good-quality home learning environments have been consistently associated with improved school readiness, whereas poor-quality learning environments can have damaging impacts on development (Winter & Kelley, 2008). A strong home learning environment requires three main elements (Dearing & Tang, 2010). The first is having access to materials and experiences that promote cognitive stimulation and enjoyment, in a physical space that is conducive to learning (Dearing & Tang, 2010). This can include physical items in the home such as books, music, toys, and games (Lahaie, 2008; Dearing & Tang, 2010). It can also include family outings to a library or museum (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). These items and experiences should be developmentally suitable and take place in an environment that is not overly loud, crowded, or unsafe (Dearing & Tang, 2010).

The second necessary element of the home learning environment is active parent involvement in educational activities (Dearing & Tang, 2010). This involves parent-child communication, engaging in reading and other educational activities together (e.g., drawing, counting, and singing songs), and parent teaching (e.g, teaching about nature and teaching household chores) (Dearing & Tang, 2010; Lahaie, 2008). Frequent and high quality parent-child communication is particularly important for children's cognitive and language development (Dearing & Tang, 2010; Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Another aspect of parent involvement is maintaining regular interaction with their child's school (Reynolds & Shlafer, 2009). This may include helping with homework, responding to school obligations, attending school events, and communicating with their child's teacher (Moles, 1993; Lahaie, 2008). This helps parents understand expectations at school and monitor their child's learning, which ultimately facilitates congruence between home and school learning environments (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006).

The third element of a strong home learning environment is a parent-child relationship characterised by affection, warmth, and responsiveness (Browne et al., 2018; Dearing & Tang, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This is particularly beneficial for children's social-emotional well-being and development, though parent-child relationships of this nature are associated with academic, language, and cognitive skills

as well (Browne et al., 2018; Dearing & Tang, 2010). The primary reason for this is that children learn in the context of social relationships (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006). With adequate social and emotional support, children are equipped to regulate their negative emotions, pay attention in class, and develop positive relationships with teachers and peers, all of which contribute to a successful school experience (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Raver, 2002).

Preschool programs

Preschool programs in the community offer important opportunities for children with and without an optimal home learning environment (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Winter & Kelly, 2008). Children at risk of low school readiness have shown positive educational outcomes after participating in high-quality programs, with benefits lasting throughout their education and into adulthood (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Winter & Kelly, 2008). Preschool programs can be centre-based, home-based, or a mix of both, and all methods offer benefits (Lahaie, 2008). However, programs that provide comprehensive family support appear to be most effective (Love et al., 2005; Winter & Kelly, 2008). This may include working with children and their parents, and providing social and health services in addition to educational services (Winter & Kelly, 2008). Head Start for example is a popular program throughout North America that targets school readiness as well as family strengthening (Love et al., 2005). After participating, parents become more involved in their child's education, more emotionally supportive to their child, and less punitive (Love et al., 2005). This is beneficial for children because these parenting behaviours are associated with improved learning, and also because learning experiences in preschool programs become more effective when they are continued at home (Anders et al., 2012; Love et al., 2005). Another influential example is the Abecedarian Study, a school readiness program for at-risk children, that provided participating families with unlimited infant formula, social services, and reduced-cost medical care in addition to educational support (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Participants showed lasting educational and health benefits (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Winter & Kelly, 2008). Overall, significant research has shown that a child's course of development can be changed for the better through early intervention programs. This is not only beneficial for individuals, as entire communities are strengthened when vulnerable populations are supported (Winter & Kelly, 2008).

2.2.   HIPPY

This thesis focuses on a specific school readiness program, the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program, also known as HIPPY. HIPPY is a home-based, early intervention program for parents, primarily mothers, with children ages three to five years (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). It aims to increase school readiness among children at risk of educational disadvantage by supporting mothers under the principle that a mother is their child's "first and most important teacher" (Mothers Matter Centre, 2022, p. 2). It is an evidence-based program that uses up-to-date research to inform their practices and is committed to ongoing research and revision (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019).

2.2.1. HIPPY Canada

HIPPY was originally developed in Israel for immigrant families in 1969, but it is now operating in ten countries around the world, including Canada, serving many different populations (Johnson et al., 2012; Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). In Canada, there are two branches of the program: Indigenous HIPPY and Multicultural HIPPY (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). Indigenous HIPPY aims to promote school readiness and create positive educational experiences for Indigenous families, especially those affected by residential schools, poverty, limited formal education, and social isolation, and there are currently four Indigenous HIPPY sites in Canada, all located in British Columbia (Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). The other branch, Multicultural HIPPY, aims to promote school readiness with immigrant and refugee families, while also teaching parents about Canada and helping them to overcome issues commonly faced during resettlement such as language and cultural barriers, social isolation, and professional accreditation issues (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). There are 27 Multicultural HIPPY sites in Canada located in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland (Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). This research examines Multicultural HIPPY only.

How HIPPY works

At each HIPPY site there is one coordinator and several home visitors. The coordinator is typically a professional in the field of education and they are responsible for hiring and training home visitors, recruiting families to participate, monitoring the quality of the program, and planning group meetings for parents (Johnson et al., 2012). Each family is assigned a home visitor, who is often from the same community as the families they serve (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). This home visitor comes to the family's home once per week for around 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the parents' needs, providing educational activities, books, and other materials (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). They provide mothers with five 15-20 minute educational activities to be done over the week with their child (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). The home visitor uses role play to teach the mother how to teach the activities, so mothers can replicate this approach when teaching their child (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). The activities provided aim to promote language skills, perceptual and sensory discrimination, logical thinking, and problem-solving, and they build on one another sequentially (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). The activities are based on play, parent-child interaction, and hands-on interaction with books, toys, and other household items (Johnson et al., 2012). Once a month, there are group meetings for parents and home visitors that allow parents to socialise, discuss what they are learning, gain access to additional resources, and attend workshops (Johnson et al., 2012). HIPPY runs for 30 weeks from October to May. Children and parents can participate for up to three years total. Year one in HIPPY is for children at age three, year two is for children at age four, and year three is for children at age five.

Home visitors in Multicultural HIPPY are typically newcomer mothers themselves, meaning they often share similar life and cultural experiences with the HIPPY parent (Johnson et al., 2012; Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). HIPPY sites make an effort to match mothers with home visitors who share their language or cultural background whenever possible (Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). In many cases, home visitors are mothers who have graduated from the program themselves (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019). HIPPY aims to hire newcomer women to overcome systemic barriers that they may face in finding employment (Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). Finding a first job in Canada is particularly challenging for newcomers due to language and cultural barriers, professional accreditation issues, and the devaluing of professional degrees acquired

outside of Canada (Guo, 2009; Samuel, 2009). On top of this, mothers in particular face additional barriers in joining the workforce and earning fair payment (Correll et al., 2007).

2.3. HIPPY research

This section outlines the research on HIPPY to date. Overall, HIPPY has been shown to positively impact the lives of children, mothers, and home visitors, providing a range of benefits. This has been found around the world and among various populations, while using methodological approaches such as experimental and quasi-experimental designs, surveys and questionnaires, interviews, and mixed-methods. This section then explores a specific gap in HIPPY research, parent-child relationships.

2.3.1. Child outcomes

Most notably, children in HIPPY have shown improved school functioning compared to children who have not participated in HIPPY. This is the most heavily researched topic in relation to HIPPY, given that school readiness is the primary aim of the program. Results show that HIPPY is associated with higher pre-kindergarten enrollment, attendance, promotion to first grade, and overall school readiness (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Enns & LeMare, 2021; Johnson et al., 2012; Payne et al., 2020). Standardised school readiness assessments for children as well as teacher-reported surveys have been used in these studies. Specific school readiness skills among HIPPY children include improved language, reading, writing, and math skills (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Brown & Lee, 2017; Holmes, 2020; Johnson et al., 2012; Nievar et al., 2018). Longitudinal studies have found select outcomes to last over time. HIPPY children, compared to their non-HIPPY counterparts, have been found to have higher math scores in grade three (Johnson et al., 2012), literacy skills in grades three and six (Bradley & Gilkey, 2002), math scores in grade five (Nievar et al., 2018), and math and reading skills in grade nine (Brown & Lee, 2014). According to parents and teachers, children in HIPPY also display behaviours related to positive classroom adaptation more frequently than non-HIPPY children. These behaviours include showing interest and enjoyment in school work, self-direction in learning, and listening and paying attention (Bradley & Gilkey, 2002). They also include social-emotional skills such as prosocial behaviour and an improved ability to relate to peers (Barnett et al., 2012; Koop

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et al., 2022; Liddell et al., 2011). Accordingly, HIPPY is associated with lower externalising behaviours such as hyperactivity and aggression (Koop et al., 2022), lower grade retention rates (Brown & Lee, 2014), and lower rates of school suspension in later grades (Bradley & Gilkey, 2002).

2.3.2. Parent outcomes

Researchers have also assessed parent outcomes in relation to HIPPY participation. For example, parents report reduced social isolation after participating in HIPPY. They report gaining greater access to social resources, increasing their engagement in the community, and feeling a higher sense of belonging in their neighbourhood (Barnett et al. 2012; Liddell et al., 2009; Liddell et al., 2011). Findings also suggest that HIPPY parents create improved home learning environments. They report increased involvement in educational activities at home, such as spending time reading or singing songs with their child, as well as increased communication with their child's school and involvement in school activities (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Barnett et al. 2012; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Holmes, 2019; Johnson et al., 2012; Liddell et al., 2011). In addition, participation in HIPPY is related to improved mental well-being among parents. They report improved feelings of confidence and self-efficacy in their ability to parent, teach, and participate in educational activities with their children (Barnett et al. 2012; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Nathans et al., 2020; Nievar, 2018). They also report more positive attitudes (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999) and less worry about their child's development (Holmes, 2020). While Barnett et al. (2012) did not find significant differences between HIPPY parents' and non-HIPPY parents' ratings of mental health, Koop et al. (2022) found that parents with clinical levels of depression had significantly lower levels of depression after participating in HIPPY for one year. Koop et al. (2022) also found parents to have significantly reduced stress levels. Interestingly, Liddell et al. (2009) found that HIPPY inspired some parents to pursue education or employment in a care-based profession themselves.

2.3.3. Home visitor outcomes

Moreover, several studies have examined the impacts of HIPPY on home visitors. First, home visitors gain employment and new skills (Liddell et al., 2009;

Mothers Matter Centre, 2022). For example, most participants in a study of 31 home visitors reported gaining skills in communication, problem-solving, taking initiative, organisation, self-management, and learning (Liddell et al., 2009). Home visitors report high satisfaction with regards to skills and experiences gained in the position, support from their supervisor, and the position overall (Palladino, 2016). They also feel supported by their supervisors to transition to other employment and higher education (Liddell et al., 2009). However, many home visitors believe that they are not fairly compensated financially for their time spent preparing for home visits (Palladino, 2016). With regards to personal and social benefits, home visitors report increased social capital and support due to their employment (Connolly & Chaitowitz, 2020; Liddell et al., 2009). They report growing their support networks through HIPPY and increased engagement in the community (Liddell et al., 2009). Home visitors also report improved personal wellbeing due to an improved sense of independence, confidence, self-esteem, and purpose (Liddell et al., 2009). Many feel motivated from this experience to accomplish additional education and career goals (Connolly & Chaitowitz, 2020; Liddell et al., 2009). Essentially, HIPPY is a helpful stepping stone for home visitors to gain employment skills and build their social networks.

2.3.4. A gap in HIPPY research: Parent-child relationships

Research on HIPPY importantly continues to monitor the program's impact on children's school readiness and school achievement. It also continues to examine HIPPY's influence on parents' involvement in their child's education, and parents' social and emotional well-being. This is necessary for ongoing quality assessment, to ensure the program is meeting its goals. However, there are topics that have not been explored within the HIPPY research. For example, research has yet to address family outcomes or relational outcomes between parent and child as a result of participating in HIPPY. As mentioned, HIPPY promotes school readiness through helping parents create a daily routine of engaging in educational activities with their children. This frequent parent-child interaction is a key element of the HIPPY approach, though limited research has assessed the impacts of this on parent-child relationships. Most existing research has looked at parent and child outcomes separately, rather than viewing the relationship as a subject of interest.

Early parent-child relationships are worthy of study because they are hypothesized to provide a blueprint for children's relational development (Bretherton, 1997; Sroufe, 2005). More specifically, they importantly influence children's developing mental health and self-concept, cognitive abilities, capacity to form close relationships with others, and ability to positively function alongside others in the world (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Ooi et al., 2006; Sroufe, 2005; Thompson, 2015). Furthermore, parent-child relationship quality, whether healthy or disfunctional, shows lasting effects into adulthood (Sroufe, 2005).

A few researchers have touched on parent-child relationships within HIPPY. Liddell et al. (2009) asked a small sample size of HIPPY parents in Australia a set of open-ended questions about their relationship with their child after participating in the program for one year. Parents reported that HIPPY resulted in an increased bond with their child, more time spent with their child, improved communication with their child, and greater understanding of their child. More recently, Nathans et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effects of HIPPY on parenting with a primarily Latino sample in Texas. This study included a survey question on parent-child closeness that asked, "How close does your child feel towards you?" and found that HIPPY parents reported closer parent-child relationships than non-HIPPY parents. These researchers considered this to be a novel finding in the HIPPY literature (Nathans et al., 2020). With regards to parenting approach, HIPPY parents have also reported higher levels of encouragement, responsiveness, and affection towards their children (Holmes, 2020), and lower levels of hostility and physical punishment towards their children after participating in the program (Barnett et al. 2012; Liddell et al., 2011). Together, these studies suggest that relationship dynamics between parents and children in HIPPY shift in a positive direction.

Strengthened parent-child relationships may be a key component to HIPPY's success, though this has not yet been fully explored. While research has found that HIPPY participation is related to increased parent involvement in educational activities (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Barnett et al. 2012; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Holmes, 2019; Johnson et al., 2012; Liddell et al., 2011), fewer studies have examined changes in parenting practices that are specific to relationship building, such as providing emotional safety and responsiveness. The current research project aims to fill this gap

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and gain a better understanding of the influence of HIPPY on parent-child relationships. While the studies mentioned (Barnett et al. 2012; Holmes, 2020; Liddell et al., 2009; Nathans et al., 2020) have contributed to our understanding on this topic, no existing study has focused specifically on parent-child relationships. Additionally, no HIPPY research has focused on this topic in Canada or within the Multicultural branch of HIPPY. The existing research that touched on parent-child relationships took place in Australia (Barnett et al. 2012; Liddell et al., 2009) and Texas (Holmes, 2020; Nathans et al., 2020). These findings may not necessarily transfer to newcomer parents in Canada.

2.4. Parent-child relationships

This section examines the ways in which parent-child relationships affect child development. Two well-established theories of parenting are explored: attachment theory and parenting style. Both frameworks organise parent-child relationship dynamics into several categories and explain how each category affects child development. They are backed by decades of research (e.g., Cassidy et al. 2013; Thompson, 2015, Pinquart & Kauser, 2018), and effects are largely consistent across countries and cultures (Cassidy et al. 2013; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018). These two parenting theories are distinct, but complementary. Together, they advocate for parents providing warmth, responsivity, and emotional safety in raising healthy children, as long as it is balanced with encouraging exploration and enforcing appropriate guidelines.

2.4.1. Attachment theory

Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, who began collaborating in the 1950s (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby was first to document the connection between negative caregiver experiences and behavioural concerns in adolescence (Bretherton, 1992). He hypothesised that warm and responsive parenting would alternatively lead to healthy social and emotional development (Bretherton, 1997). Ainsworth is known for her influential research on attachment styles, which found that infants responded to their mothers differently based on the quality of their relationship (Bretherton, 1992). This work allowed Ainsworth and colleagues to classify parent-child attachment as either secure or insecure, with three subclassifications of insecure

attachment: ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganised (Bretherton, 1992; Main & Solomon, 1986).

Attachment styles

Secure attachment

Secure attachment requires parents to provide what Bowlby and Ainsworth referred to as a "safe haven" and "secure base" (Bretherton, 1992; Bretherton, 1997). A safe haven refers to a caregiver that is consistently available to respond to their child's emotional needs (Brumariu & Kerns, 2010). The caregiver provides warmth, sensitivity, and a willingness to engage in open and non-judgemental communication when the child is in distress, allowing the child to quickly feel soothed and return to baseline (Bretherton 1997; Cassidy, 1994). This child then feels comfortable seeking their caregiver when needed because they trust them to be responsive (Brumariu & Kerns, 2010; Cassidy, 1994). This process makes the experience of distress in itself less threatening, and allows for the development of healthy emotion regulation skills (Cassidy, 1994). A secure base refers to a point of reference from which a child can explore (Cassidy, 1994). Caregivers providing a secure base encourage their children to freely explore their environment when it is safe (Cassidy, 1994). The child feels confident to venture out because they know they have a safe haven to return to when needed (Bretherton, 1997; Cassidy, 1994). This complementary balance between togetherness and separateness allows secure attachment to form (Bretherton, 1997). Children who are securely attached use open and direct communication with their caregiver (Cassidy, 1994). They seek help from their caregiver in times of distress and do not exaggerate or hide their emotions (Cassidy, 1994). Likewise, they openly display joy with their caregiver when experiencing positive emotions (Cassidy, 1994). Secure attachment in infancy is associated with positive parent-child relationships in later years (Thompson, 2015).

Insecure attachment

Caregivers of insecurely attached children fail to provide their children with a safe haven and secure base. This prompts children to cope in several ways, described by the remaining attachment styles (Cassidy, 1994). These methods of coping are effective in meeting the child's needs for love and acceptance in the short-term, but they are harmful

in the long-term (Cassidy, 1994). Unfortunately, these relationship dynamics limit children's ability to develop healthy emotion regulation skills and independence, resulting in a range of developmental challenges (Cassidy, 1994). For one, children with ambivalent attachment excessively seek their caregiver's attention because they do not trust them to be responsive (Cassidy, 1994; Duschinsky 2015). This happens when caregivers are inconsistently available to their child's attachment needs, leading children to use exaggerated expressions of distress to gain their attention (Cassidy, 1994). Ambivalent attachment leads to higher levels of anxiety, negative affect, and dependence on the caregiver (Cassidy, 1994). Children with avoidant attachment typically present as emotionally neutral and engage in neutral interactions with their caregiver (Cassidy, 1994). They may appear to be calm because they have learned to mask feelings of distress (Cassidy, 1994). This behaviour occurs as a result of caregivers that dismiss or selectively ignore their child's attachment needs (Cassidy, 1994). As the child feels rejected by these responses, they learn that their emotions are unwelcome and display neutrality to avoid future rejection (Cassidy, 1994). Children with disorganised attachment display unpredictable behaviours toward their parents, representing a conflict between wanting to closeness and distance (Duschinsky, 2015). This occurs when parents are a source of both connection and anxiety (Lyons-Ruth & Spielman, 2004). It signifies a disruption to parent-child attachment, where the child does not have an established method of coping with their distress (Duschinsky 2015).

Internal working models

The concept of internal working models explains how early attachment styles tend to persist over time (Bretherton, 1997). An internal working model refers to a child's developing understanding of relationships and the self (Bretherton, 1997). Securely attached children, for example, see their primary caregiver as sensitive and available to meet their needs, allowing them to develop an internal working model of themselves as valued, and of others as trustworthy (Bretherton, 1992; Ooi et al., 2006). In contrast, children with insecure attachments, based on their caregiving histories, are more likely to form the belief that they are unworthy and that others are unsafe (Bretherton, 1992; Ooi et al., 2006). Moreover, positive perceptions of others encourage the development of prosocial skills like cooperation, empathy, and open communication (Ooi et al., 2006; Sroufe, 2005). Securely attached children come to expect positive relationships with

others and develop the skills required to maintain them (Sroufe, 2005). Insecurely attached children on the other hand are at a disadvantage with regards to relationship development and feelings of self-worth.

Impact of attachment on development

Research on attachment theory has grown exponentially since its origin, and the evidence continues to show that attachment quality between parent and child has a powerful influence on the child's later relational functioning, mental health, physical health, and academic success. This is examined in greater detail in the following sections. It is worth noting here that although most of the attachment literature has focused on parent-child bonds, it is common for children to form attachments with other close individuals in their life (Fraley, 2019; Sroufe, 2005). These relationships contribute to the child's developing internal working models and can impact their attachment style (Sroufe, 2005). It is also worth noting that attachment security between a parent and child is not always consistent throughout childhood. Factors such as poverty, family stress, or family change can influence relationship quality (Belsky & Fearon, 2002; Beiser et al., 2002). Secure attachment that remains consistent as a child ages is most predictive of positive outcomes, though attachment that changes from insecure to secure is associated with more positive outcomes than attachment that changes from secure to insecure (Belsky & Fearon, 2002; Thompson, 2015). Overall, parent-child attachment is not a perfect predictor of subsequent social and emotional development, though it does provide a strong foundation (Sroufe, 2005; Thompson, 2015).

Relationships

Most notably, secure attachment is associated with stronger social skills and healthier interpersonal relationships, from preschool to adulthood (Sroufe, 2005). By age five, children with secure attachments are better at empathising and understanding others' emotions compared to those with insecure attachments, likely as a result of engaging in more emotionally open and complex conversation with their caregivers (Ontai & Thompson, 2002; Raikes & Thompson, 2006; Sroufe, 2005). Securely attached preschoolers also display increased positive affect when interacting with peers and use positive affect to build relationships (Sroufe, 2005). This parallels their interactions with their parents, given that parents of insecurely attached children are more likely to

minimise or criticise their child's positive feelings, and less likely to provide affectionate or enthusiastic responses (Gentzler et al., 2015). By kindergarten, securely attached children are rated by their teachers as having more mutual and cooperative friendships, being more empathetic, and being more accepted by their classmates than insecurely attached children (Clark & Ladd 2000). They engage in less peer conflict at this age as well (Raikes et al., 2013). In middle childhood, children with a history of secure attachment continue to have a higher number of close mutual relationships and display more active involvement in their peer groups (Sroufe, 2005). They are also more likely to provide comfort to their peers in distress (Gross et al., 2017). This is likely due to stronger emotional regulation skills and seeing this behaviour modelled at home, allowing them to be prepared to care for others (Gross et al., 2017). In adolescence, secure attachment is associated with stronger leadership skills and the ability to more skillfully handle sensitive or challenging social situations (Sroufe, 2005). Securely attached adolescents benefit from increases in social skills during this age, whereas insecurely attached adolescents display increased misbehaviour (Allen et al., 2002). This is important as this age group becomes increasingly reliant on their attachment bonds with friends and romantic partners (Fraley, 2019). Remarkably, the influence of attachment in childhood continues into adulthood in that secure parent relationships are associated with secure adult relationships (Fraley, 2019). Those with a secure attachment history are more trusting in their romantic relationships, whereas those with ambivalent attachment are more dependent on their partner, and those with avoidant attachment are less trusting and have less intense feelings of love in their romantic relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1990).

Mental health

It is no surprise that secure attachment is also associated with stronger mental health, given the inherent ties between social and emotional well-being. For one, secure attachment in childhood is associated with an increased capacity for emotional awareness and emotion regulation, allowing children to be better equipped at handling hardship and stress (Thompson & Meyer, 2007; Sroufe, 2005). Children with secure attachment histories are more likely to cope with problems by using persistence and flexibility while children with insecure attachment histories are more likely to display frustration and negative affect, use aggression, or give up on solving the problem

(Sroufe, 2005). As mentioned, this is because children learn to emotionally regulate through caregivers that are consistently responsive, accepting, and willing to discuss emotions (Thompson, 2015). In contrast, parents who dismiss, punish, or criticise their child's emotional expression stunt their emotion regulation skills (Thompson & Meyer, 2007). Therefore, secure attachment helps children to develop confidence, positive self-esteem, and self-reliance as well (Thompson, 2015; Sroufe, 2005). Children with secure attachments describe themselves with more positive language, and teachers rate these children as more confident, higher in self-esteem, more independent, and less reliant compared to those with insecure attachment (Sroufe, 2005). Furthermore, those who are securely attached display more positive affect; children and babies are more likely to be seen smiling and having fun (Sroufe, 2005; Waters et al., 1979) and adults report experiencing more positive and less negative emotions (Schiffrin, 2014). Conversely, children with insecure attachment have higher rates of internalising behaviours (e.g., sadness or fear) and externalising behaviours (e.g., aggression or impulsivity) (Brumariu & Kerns, 2010; Cassidy et al., 2013; Ooi et al., 2006). They are also more likely to be diagnosed with a psychological disorder (Cassidy et al. 2013; Sroufe, 2005).

Physical health

Attachment is also related to physical health. Insecure attachment history is associated with health conditions later in life such as chronic pain, stroke, heart attack, and high blood pressure (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010). One reason for this is that those with insecure attachment are more susceptible to experiencing stress, which is linked to chronic inflammation, a risk factor in the development of many physical illnesses (Chung et al., 2009; Maunder & Hunter, 2001). Another reason is that under-developed emotion regulation skills facilitate the use of external coping methods that have negative health consequences such as substance use, under-eating, and over-eating (Maunder & Hunter, 2001). In addition, insecure attachment is associated with problematic help-seeking behaviour such as avoiding the use of medical services or incorrectly following treatment (Maunder & Hunter, 2001).

Academic achievement

Finally, parent-child relationship quality is connected to children's academic achievement. Compared to children with an insecure attachment history, securely

attached children have higher executive functioning in preschool (Bernier et al., 2012); are more socially, emotionally, behaviourally, and academically adjusted to school in middle childhood (Granot & Mayseless, 2001); show enhanced cognitive functioning throughout childhood and adolescence (Jacobsen et al., 1994); and are more likely to graduate from highschool (Ramsdal et al., 2015). In fact, positive parent-child interactions are a protective factor among children at risk of school failure (Gregory & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008). Parent warmth and responsiveness has been consistently associated with children's school achievement even when controlling for factors such as SES, cultural background, availability of learning materials at home, and parent involvement in their child's education (Dearing & Tang, 2006; Gregory & Rhimm-Kaufman, 2008). This suggests that the emotional climate of the parent-child relationship plays an important role in the child's learning (Dearing & Tang, 2010).

There are several explanations as to why attachment is associated with school success. The first is that parents of securely attached children are more effective teachers (van IJzendoorn et al., 1995). These parents are more likely to be attuned and responsive to their child's needs, use encouragement, and provide more positive feedback than negative, all of which contribute to a strong home learning environment (Meins, 1997; West et al., 2013). A second hypothesis is related to emotion regulation (van IJzendoorn et al., 1995). Securely attached children are more skillful at regulating negative emotions, meaning they are also more comfortable problem-solving independently (Matas et al., 1978). These children show persistence, enjoy challenging tasks, and use cooperation in working with others (Matas et al., 1978). Conversely, insecurely attached children are more likely to ask for help even when a task is within their skillset, or disengage when challenged (Colman & Thompson, 2002). A third explanation is due to relational skills and expectations (van IJzendoorn et al., 1995). That is, children with secure attachment are better prepared to develop positive relationships with teachers and peers (Sroufe, 2005), and these relationships are important as they contribute to emotion regulation, motivation, and the enjoyment of learning (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Raver, 2002). The fourth explanation is that securely attached children are more cooperative at school due to feeling lower levels of anxiety (van IJzendoorn et al., 1995). For example, securely attached children are more likely to pay attention, stay on task, follow classroom rules, and communicate effectively with adults, all of which support learning (West et al., 2013).

2.4.2. Parenting styles

Another major theory that addresses the impact of parenting on children's development is Diana Baumrind's model of parenting styles, developed in 1966 (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). This model combines parenting values and beliefs, parenting practices and behaviour, and the emotional relationship between parent and child (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Baumrind outlines four main parenting styles known as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and disengaged, which are based on differing levels of two dimensions: responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1966, 2013). This is represented in Figure 1. Responsiveness is characterised by emotional support and sensitivity to the child's needs, and demandingness is characterised by structure and high expectations (Baumrind, 2013). Authoritative parenting involves high levels of both responsiveness and demandingness, and is optimal for child development (Baumrind, 2013). Each parenting style is described in detail in the following section.
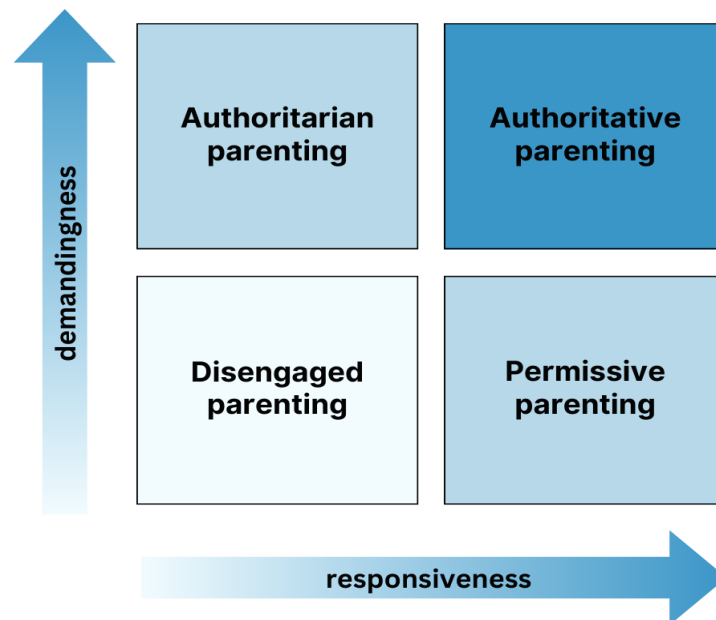
Figure 1.   Baumrind's four parenting styles

Permissive

Permissive parents have high levels of responsiveness and low levels of demandingness (Baumrind, 2013). That is, they are unconditionally accepting, loving, and affirming, and avoid controlling their child (Baumrind, 1966). They enforce few rules

and do not use punishment (Baumrind, 1966). A permissive parent, for example, is unlikely to assign household chores (Baumrind, 1966). The permissive parent highly values autonomy and does not attempt to shape their child's behaviour (Baumrind, 1966). They often believe that parental control is counteractive to a child's growth (Baumrind, 1966). When conflict arises between parent and child they are unlikely to demand compliance because they worry that their child will become upset or feel rejected (Baumrind, 2013). This style of parenting has several negative impacts on development. For instance, children of permissive parents have less motivation to learn and accomplish goals (Hoang, 2007). It is also linked to lower emotional intelligence and interest in self growth (Wischerth et al., 2016). Wischerth et al. (2016) suggest that children of permissive parents have under-developed emotion regulation skills due to having fewer experiences with negative emotions and conflict. They also have less experience complying with demands, and may struggle with following demands in other settings (Wischerth et al., 2016).

Authoritarian

Authoritarian parents are characterised by low levels of responsiveness and high levels of demandingness (Baumrind, 2013). In sharp contrast to permissive parents, they provide low levels of warmth and affection, and maintain strict control over their child (Baumrind, 1966, 2013). They believe it is their responsibility to shape their child to comply with a set standard of rules (Baumrind, 1966). Authoritarian parents highly value obedience and order, and are discouraging of child beliefs and behaviours that are in conflict with the parent (Baumrind, 1966). They do not share their rationale behind demands and when challenged, and they are unwilling to hear the child's perspective or negotiate (Baumrind, 2013). The authoritarian parent uses punishment and rejection to convey disapproval (Baumrind, 1966). This style of parenting has lasting harmful effects on children such as low life satisfaction and low self-esteem (Lavrič & Naterer, 2020; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Further, harsh and punitive parenting impairs the development of emotion regulation skills and models aggressive behaviour, which can lead to aggression in children (Chang et al., 2003).

Authoritative

Authoritative parenting is high in responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 2013). Like permissive parents, they are sensitive, loving, and encouraging of open communication (Baumrind, 2013). Like authoritarian parents, they have high expectations and maintain control. However, control within authoritative parenting is characterised by providing structure and routine to maintain predictability in the child's life, and shaping the child's behaviour to positively coexist with others (Baumrind, 2013). This type of control is not intrusive, manipulative, or undermining of autonomy, as it is in authoritarian parenting (Baumrind, 2013). Authoritative parents value their child's autonomy and honour their individual needs while also valuing compliance with rules (Baumrind, 2013). Authoritative parents are clear about what they disapprove of (such as behaviour that is harmful to others) rather than being unconditionally accepting (Baumrind, 1966, 2013). Baumrind (2013) explains that parents have the right to be an authority figure over their child due to their superior knowledge and ability to protect them. They maintain firm control in times of conflict but explain their rationale, are willing to listen to the child's perspective, and are open to negotiation, especially as the child gets older (Baumrind, 2013). Where appropriate, they allow their child to make their own decisions (Baumrind, 2013). Baumrind (2013) warns that authoritative parenting is misunderstood by those who see love and control on opposite ends of the same spectrum. She explains that love and control are two separate dimensions, and rather than finding a balance between the two, parenting with high levels of both yields optimal outcomes (Baumrind, 2013).

This style of parenting is consistently associated with positive outcomes. For instance, children of authoritative parents have significantly better mental health, self-esteem, and quality of life in adolescence compared to children of other parenting styles (Niaraki & Rahimi, 2012; Simons & Conger, 2007). They also have more developed social skills, evidenced by increased prosocial behaviour and self-assertiveness (Baumrind et al., 2010), and show decreased delinquency (Simons & Conger, 2007). They are more oriented towards learning and achievement, and more likely to be successful in school than children exposed to the other parenting styles (Hoang, 2007; Simons & Conger, 2007; Spera, 2005). In adulthood, they report greater life satisfaction (Lavrič & Naterer, 2020). While children of authoritarian parents can be high-achieving in

some contexts (Checa & Abundis-Gutierrez, 2018), children of authoritative parents are more likely to internalise their parents' attitudes and values around school and work, compared to children of authoritarian parents who may achieve high grades out of fear of punishment (Baumrind, 2013; Dearing & Tang, 2010). Children with two authoritative parents show the most optimal outcomes, though having one authoritative parent can protect against the negative effects of having a second non-authoritative parent (Simons & Conger, 2007).

Disengaged

The final parenting style, disengaged (also known as rejecting-neglecting parenting), is characterised by low levels of both responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 2013). Disengaged parents are the opposite of authoritative; they are uninvolved and neglectful of their child's needs (Baumrind, 2013). This parenting style is highly detrimental to development (Briere et al., 2017). Disengaged parenting is associated with child abuse, insecure attachment, and mental health concerns in adulthood (Briere et al., 2017).

2.4.3. Parenting interventions

Interventions that aim to improve parent-child relationships are typically geared towards families in which the children have already been identified as having diagnosed mental health disorders or who display severe internalising and externalising symptoms (e.g., Berlin et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2004). This is unfortunate because there are many children who are at risk of developing mental health concerns due to unfavourable parenting practices (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Moullin et al., 2014; Simons & Conger, 2007) who could use earlier preventative support. These children are at an increased risk of struggling in the future with their relationships, mental health, and academic achievement due to the quality of their early relationships. Certain socially or economically disadvantaged populations are at an even greater risk due to parent levels of stress that can impact the quality of parenting and, in turn, the quality of parent-child relationships (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

This is where other types of programs for parents and children can play an important role (Scharfe, 2011). Mental health treatment systems in Canada do not have the capacity to meet the needs of the population, and one way to reduce the burden of care on treatment systems is to increase mental health promotion and prevention efforts that build resilience in children (Barican et al., 2021; Waddell et al., 2005). Educational programs that work with parents for example can provide a preventive approach to insecure attachment and poor parenting rather than a treatment approach when family discord is already present (Scharfe, 2011). Prevention approaches reach a wider population, can be more effective, and are typically more affordable (Greenberg et al., 2017; Waddell et al., 2005). In fact, all parenting programs, no matter the primary focus, provide an opportunity to educate parents about parenting and parent-child relationships.

2.5. Social and cultural context

The current study examines the influence of a school readiness program on newcomer families in Canada, a population with specific social and cultural characteristics. For example, compared to Canadian-born families, newcomer families are more likely to live with low SES (Beiser et al., 2002; Milbrath & Guhn, 2019), experience social isolation (Stick et al., 2021), face language and cultural barriers to community involvement (Antony-Neuman, 2019), and experience tension between cultures (Choi et al., 2008; Samuel, 2009). While many newcomer families experience a positive transition to Canada, the sudden and significant life changes that occur during immigration can cause stress and family hardship (Hatton & Bacic, 2001).

In this section, social and cultural considerations are explored through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory. This theory is based on the premise that human development is highly influenced by social environments such as family, neighbourhood, and cultural background. Bronfenbrenner defined five interconnected and interacting social systems that exert an influence on children and their relationships (Paat, 2013), represented in Figure 2. The child is in the center and nested within several layers of social systems that are increasingly distanced from direct interactions (Paat, 2013). The five systems of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem

(Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986; Paat, 2013). Examples within each social system are provided in Figure 2. In the following sections, each system is defined and examined with examples that are relevant to HIPPY children and their families. In understanding the social and cultural context of newcomers, Ali (2008, p. 151) provides an important reminder:

> Newcomer families, like families everywhere, are not a homogenous group. Their settlement experiences in Canada vary a great deal based on the human, social and cultural capital they bring with them, the circumstances under which they migrate, and the response of the receiving society to their arrival.
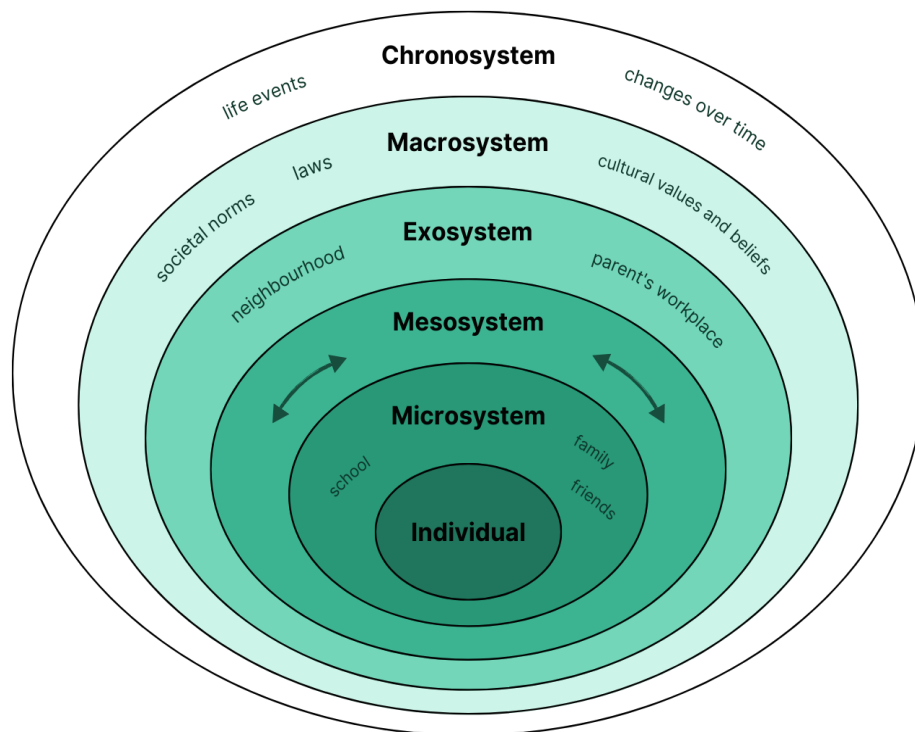
Figure 2. **Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory**

2.5.1. Microsystem

Within the microsystem are the relationships in a child's immediate environment, with whom they interact with on a regular basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Paat, 2013). For a child in HIPPY, the microsystem would likely include the members of their household (such as parents and siblings), the individuals they interact with at school (such as

teachers and peers), and their HIPPY home visitor. It could also include extended family members, neighbours, members of their religious organisation, or anyone else they interact with often. This system typically gets larger as children get older and their social networks expand (Paat, 2013).

Family

The family is typically the most influential element of a child's microsystem, which is why family relationships have a powerful impact on development. Newcomer families undergo significant changes during the process of immigration, which can create stress within family relationships. For instance, newcomer parents are typically separated from their previous social support system, putting them at risk of loneliness and depression (Stick et al., 2021; Samuel, 2009). Child-rearing responsibilities may increase for newcomer parents as they have less access to childcare support in their receiving country (Hatton & Bacic, 2001). This can cause both mothers and fathers to take on greater responsibility and have to reorganise their family dynamics (Hatton & Bacic, 2001). For example, in some cases, two parents may choose to immigrate at separate times from one another (Hatton & Bacic, 2001). In the case of refugees, the potential for stress and mental health challenges is amplified as migration is often sudden and unplanned (Hatton & Bacic, 2001). There are high rates of trauma among refugees due to the extreme circumstances and personal losses involved in their move (Porter & Haslam, 2005).

The resulting distress and social isolation from these experiences are known to contribute to family discord (Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Samuel, 2009). This is because stress and mental health concerns can impede parents' ability to be available and responsive to their child's needs (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Raikes & Thompson, 2006). It can also cause parents to become more authoritarian (controlling with punishment) and less authoritative (responsive, affectionate, and fair) (Xu et al., 2005). As research has shown, these experiences can have damaging impacts to the parent-child relationship. On the other hand, family cohesion (characterised by close and supportive relationships) can help to reduce the stress of immigration (Paat, 2013).

Another possible family issue for children in newcomer families is parentification (Titzmann, 2012). This is when parents become dependent on their children to take on adult roles in the family (Titzmann, 2012). Parentification can happen in newcomer families because children typically acculturate faster than their parents, resulting in them taking on responsibilities such as interpreting for their parents (Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Titzmann, 2012). While there are some benefits to this, such as increased self-efficacy in children (Titzmann, 2012), the level of responsibility assigned to the child may not be developmentally appropriate and can cause stress, especially when a child is expected to provide emotional support or is exposed to sensitive adult information (e.g., when translating financial documents or interpreting at appointments) (Burton, 2007; Engelhardt, 2012). Parentification is associated with mental health concerns and insecure attachment in children (Engelhardt, 2012).

School

Individuals at school are another important component of a child's microsystem. Positive relationships with peers and teachers at school provide children with social support and promote well-being and academic success (e.g., Mashburn & Pianta, 2006). For children in newcomer families, these relationships can also support their language skills and social integration into the host society (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2008). However, children in newcomer families may experience discrimination by peers and teachers (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2008; Chen & Tse, 2010; Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). A study of 1053 newcomer adolescents living in multiple cities across Canada found that 25% experienced discrimination by peers, and 14% experienced discrimination by teachers (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Further, discrimination was negatively associated with children's sense of social competence (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Another study in Canada found that despite no significant differences in behaviour between Canadian-born and Chinese-born students, the Chinese-born students were perceived by their teachers as less social, less cooperative, and less accepted by their peer group (Chen & Tse, 2010). These students facing discrimination also felt lonelier, less satisfied in their social relationships, and had lower self worth (Chen & Tse, 2010). Fortunately, participation in cultural activities was related to increased social competence, acceptance, and self-worth at school, suggesting that positive social experiences in other contexts can buffer against the negative effects of

discrimination (Chen & Tse, 2010). Teachers play a key role as well in newcomer students' experience of social integration and acceptance, as teachers who model warmth and acceptance towards newcomers increase the likelihood that their students will be accepting towards them as well (Kiuru, 2015).

2.5.2. Mesosystem

The mesosystem is comprised of the relationships and interactions between members of one's microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). For most children this involves the relationships among their parents, teachers, and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). For children in HIPPY, their mesosystem would also include the relationship between their parent and home visitor.

Parents and teachers

As evidenced in previous sections, parent involvement at school positively impacts children's education (e.g., Lahaie, 2008). This may be especially helpful for newcomer families since they are likely to be unfamiliar with the school system (Antony-Newman, 2019). However, newcomer parent involvement at school is complex for a variety of reasons. For one, newcomers face language and cultural barriers, which can also impede their understanding of Canadian norms and expectations related to parent involvement (Antony-Newman 2019, Paat, 2013). Newcomer parents may lack resources, time, and flexibility in their schedule to engage in school events and activities (Antony-Newman, 2019). On top of this, teachers can be racially discriminating toward newcomer parents, causing them to feel excluded and unwelcome to participate (Antony-Newman, 2019). Additionally, newcomer parents may have different values and expectations about their child's education, impacting their decision to form relationships with teachers. For instance, some newcomer parents highly value the Canadian education system and do not expect to become involved because they see the teacher as the authority on their child's education (Antony-Newman 2019; Hatton & Bacic, 2001). Alternatively, other newcomer parents wish to be more involved, and report wanting to receive increased feedback on their child's academic achievement so they can supplement their child's learning at home (Antony-Newman, 2019).

Parents and peers

A child's peer relationships are also shaped by parents in several ways. For instance, parents choose the neighbourhood they live in, the school their child attends, and other extracurricular activities their child participates in (Paat. 2013). Newcomer parents' values and level of acculturation have an impact as well (Paat. 2013). For example, some newcomer parents may encourage their child to spend time with peers from similar cultural backgrounds as theirs to maintain family values, while others may encourage their child to integrate or assimilate to the new culture (Paat. 2013). Once again, newcomers in Canada are far from homogenous with regards to their values and approach to acculturation.

2.5.3. Exosystem

The exosystem is a social environment that is external to the child, but affects them indirectly through directly affecting those in their microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Paat, 2013). For a child in HIPPY this could include their neighbourhood, parents' workplace, parents' social network, local school board, and community's HIPPY site (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The individual is affected by these social environments but does not play an active role in them (Paat, 2013).

Parent social network

Parents' level of social support is particularly relevant to newcomer families, as they have been recently disconnected from their existing social network and are likely to initially experience social isolation (Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Makwarimba et al., 2010). Several types of social support can increase resilience to stress and protect against trauma and depression among parents (Ozbay et al., 2007; Sheppard, 2004; Sheppard, 2009). For example, tangible support such as child care can lower parenting stress by reducing one's number of tasks and responsibility; informational support allows parents to access helpful resources; and emotional support can help parents to feel more positively about their experiences, understood, and less alone (Makwarimba et al., 2010; Sheppard, 2009). Thus, parents with greater social support systems have a greater capacity to be effective and responsive parents (Armstrong et al., 2005). Social support is linked to authoritative parenting and fewer negative interactions between parent and

child (Xu et al., 2005). It is therefore unsurprising that family social support predicts positive outcomes for children such as improved school functioning and fewer emotional and behavioural concerns (Georgiades, 2007; Sroufe, 2005).

2.5.4. Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the broader cultural context in which the child lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is comprised of informal norms, values, and beliefs in society, as well as formal political systems and laws (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Paat, 2013). The macrosystem of a child in HIPPY includes Canadian culture as well as the culture of their (or their parent's) home country. It may also include subcultures related to religious background or geographic region (e.g., living somewhere urban versus rural) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Cultural inclusivity

As discussed in the previous sections, social support and inclusion have benefits for both newcomer children and parents. However, newcomers' level of social inclusion is affected by public perceptions of immigration in their host society (Paat, 2013). That is, newcomers have a greater chance of feeling accepted and supported when cultural views are welcoming (Paat, 2013). Some newcomers in Canada have reported positive experiences accessing social support, highlighting community and religious organisations as a useful source of tangible and emotional support and the government as an appreciated source of financial support, positively impacting their mental and physical health (Makwarimba et al., 2010). This being said, racism and discrimination are still very common in Canada, making it challenging for many newcomers to receive adequate social support (Makwarimba et al., 2010 Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Some have found other newcomers who have lived in Canada longer than them to be the most supportive (Georgiades, 2007; Makwarimba et al., 2010).

Socioeconomic status

Moreover, many immigrants and refugee are not set up for socioeconomic success upon arrival to Canada. For one, they are at a social disadvantage because

they are less familiar with Canadian norms (Paat, 2013). Secondly, many newcomers have trouble finding suitable employment (Guo, 2009; Samuel, 2009). Despite being highly skilled and educated, it often takes several years for newcomers to find employment in their field of expertise because credentials from other countries are devalued both explicitly (by governments, institutions, and employers) and implicitly (through discriminatory hiring practices) (Guo, 2009; Samuel, 2009). As a result, children in newcomer families are more likely to live with low SES than children in Canadian-born families (Beiser et al., 2002; Georgiades, 2007; Milbrath & Guhn, 2019). Unfortunately, low SES negatively impacts parents' capacity to provide their children with educational materials and experiences, impacting school readiness and achievement (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Browne et al., 2018). It also negatively impacts families mental and physical health, which can lead to harsh and ineffective parenting, increased family discord, and emotional and behavioural concerns in children (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Conger et al., 2010).

Cultural conflict

Due to the many examples listed above, the experience of adjusting to a new culture is highly stressful, a phenomenon known as acculturative stress (Samuel, 2009). As children in HIPPY grow up in mainstream Canadian culture, they may find themselves caught between opposing cultural values at school and at home (Choi et al., 2008). This can cause intergenerational cultural dissonance, which is when parents and children experience conflict related to differing cultural values (Choi et al., 2008). This is a common experience among newcomer families that can lead to family discord and weakened parent-child relationships (Choi et al., 2008). The child, for example, may favour Canadian culture and feel ashamed of the culture from their parents' country of origin (Samuel, 2009), whereas the parent may favour the cultural values from their home country and lose their sense of authority and self-efficacy with their child (Ali, 2008; Hatton & Bacic, 2001). This can create distance, decreased communication, and feelings of inadequacy in both parents and children (Samuel, 2009). A close parent-child relationship on the other hand provides a buffering effect on intergenerational cultural dissonance and the associated consequences (Choi et al., 2008; Paat, 2013). Children and parents do not have to maintain the same values, but tension is less likely when

children respect their parents cultural beliefs and when parents acculturate at a similar pace as their children (Paat, 2013).

2.5.5. Chronosystem

The chronosystem describes changes in one's social environment over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). It includes expected events across the life span such as starting school, entering the workforce, getting married, and retiring, in addition to unexpected events such as moving, divorce, or experiencing a death in the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The chronosystem takes into account the age and time period in which these events occur, as these factors play an influential role as well (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Paat, 2013). For a child in HIPPY at the time of this study, their chronosystem may include immigration, starting preschool or kindergarten, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is a clear example of an unexpected life event for a child in HIPPY, that was taking place during the time of the current study. This experience changed family life in many ways as families were spending more time at home and less time in the community, children were attending school online or homeschooled, and parents were facing new stressors (Stoecklin et al., 2021). It caused increased stress and mental health concerns for both children and parents. 66% of children aged two to five for example displayed increased anxiety, irritability, and hyperactivity during the first few months of lockdown measures in Canada (Cost et al., 2022). This decline was strongly linked to the stress of social isolation (Cost et al., 2022). Older age groups experienced even greater levels of mental health decline as their lives were more severely altered (Cost et al., 2022). There were also declines in measures of learning and academic achievement for many children, with children who were already vulnerable (due to a lack of social, economic, or educational resources) being most negatively impacted (Whitley et al., 2021). Parents reported high levels of stress during the pandemic as well (Carroll et al., 2020). In fact, mental health decline was greater among parents than adults without children (Gadermann et al., 2021). Common stressors included finances, balancing childcare and homeschooling with work, their child's mental health, their child's education, contracting COVID-19, and uncertainty

about the future (Carroll et al., 2020; Gadermann et al., 2021). Mental health decline was also greater among parents with lower incomes (Feinberg et al., 2021).

Since parents were spending increased time with their children during the pandemic, they reported increases in both positive and negative interactions with them (Gadermann et al., 2021). Positive interactions included spending quality time together, showing affection, and noticing their child's strengths (Gadermann et al., 2021). Negative interactions included increased conflict, discipline, and harsh parenting, though this was more common among parents who were stressed about their finances and mental health (Gadermann et al., 2021). With regards to physical health, children and parents were engaging in significantly less physical activity and time outside, and more screen time (Carroll et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2020). However, some families adopted healthy behaviours during the pandemic such as trying new hobbies, spending more time cooking at home, involving children in food preparation, and eating less fast food and take-out (Carroll et al., 2020). Clearly, COVID-19 had both positive and negative impacts on families, though vulnerable families were more likely to experience negative impacts. Given the recency of this event, long term impacts of COVID-19 on young children's development have not yet been observed.

Chapter 3.   Methods

In this chapter, I outline the methods I took to complete this project. I first describe my theoretical approach used to answer the research questions, and the guidelines I followed to ensure rigour. Next, I describe the role of my social positionality in conducting this research, the ethical considerations made to ensure this project is beneficial and non harmful to those involved, and my personal interest in the topic. I then explain my step-by-step procedure, including collaboration with the Mothers Matter Centre, recruitment of research participants, data collection, and data analysis. Last, I provide an overview of the research participants' demographic information, collected via demographic questionnaires.

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Constructivism

This thesis is situated in the theoretical framework of constructivism. Constructivist research aims to understand the lived experiences of individuals with under-researched perspectives, from the perspective of those who have lived them (Mertens, 2010). Constructivism departs from the assumption of more traditional research paradigms (such as positivism and post-positivism) that there is one objective reality to be discovered, and instead accepts multiple realities as truth (Mertens, 2010). These realities are equally valid even if they contradict one another, and can change over time (Mertens, 2010). Further, constructivism views knowledge as socially constructed by those involved in the research process (Mertens, 2010). In other words, the researcher and research participant are engaging in an interactive process of co-creating meaning, where each individual is influencing the other (Mertens, 2010). Researchers are encouraged to be flexible and open to new ideas while conducting constructivist research in that hypotheses are not made beforehand, research questions can change during the research process, and findings are not based on expectations from existing literature (Mertens, 2010).

Qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document reviews are preferred in the constructivist paradigm (Mertens, 2010). I chose to conduct interviews for this research project because I wanted to understand participants' perspectives and hear their stories of participating in HIPPY. I was particularly interested to learn what HIPPY meant to parents with regards to the parent-child relationship. It was not feasible for this research project to interview children or use participant observation, since the data were collected online over Zoom. In addition to the interviews, I collected sociodemographic data from participants in the form of a 12-question survey, prior to interviewing them. I did this because participant background information is helpful for providing context (Mertens, 2010).

Criteria for constructivism

Constructivist research does not intend to be objective, replicable, or generalizable as is expected in post-positivist research (Mertens, 2010). Rather, it follows the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Mertens, 2010).

Credibility refers to providing an accurate portrayal of the participant's perspective (Mertens, 2010). It parallels the concept of internal validity in post-positivist research, which means that the conclusions being drawn from the research are accurate (Mertens, 2010). To increase credibility, I used member checking and peer debriefing (Mertens, 2010). Member checking refers to checking with participants to ensure they have been understood correctly (Mertens, 2010). I did this during interviews by frequently paraphrasing what I heard back to the participant and asking for clarification when needed (Mertens, 2010). I also used member checking after the interviews by sending participants a copy of their interview transcript for them to review and make edits to if needed before data analysis began (Mertens, 2010). Peer debriefing refers to having other researchers review and critique one's work, which was done by my academic supervisor and committee (Guba, 1981).

Transferability is the second criterion and refers to the applicability of the research to other contexts (Mertens, 2010). It mirrors external validity in post-positivist research, which aims to use a sample of participants that is representative of the

population, so research conclusions can generalise to a larger population (Mertens, 2010). Constructivist research however is smaller in scale and does not intend to generalise to a larger population, though it might (Mertens, 2010). Therefore, constructivist researchers are expected to provide plenty of detail about the context of their research, such as the time, place, and culture in which it occurred (Mertens, 2010). This is called a thick description and helps readers understand the complexity of the findings (Mertens, 2010). It is then the reader's job in constructivist research to assess if the findings are applicable to other contexts.

Dependability is the third criterion of constructivism and serves a similar function as reliability in post-positivist research (Mertens, 2010). Reliability refers to obtaining consistent research findings over time, as this provides evidence for high quality research methods (Mertens, 2010). In constructivist research on the other hand, changes in research findings are expected, and dependability is used to monitor this change and track the quality of research (Mertens, 2010). This is accomplished by providing a thorough documentation of research procedures so the reader can assess the quality of the research procedures (Mertens, 2010). This is called a dependability audit and is outlined throughout this chapter.

The last criterion is confirmability and refers to the "chain of evidence" explaining how the data were interpreted (Mertens, 2010). This means that research conclusions can be traced back to their origin and the researchers' reasoning behind data interpretation is clear (Mertens, 2010). This is known as a confirmability audit (Mertens, 2010). I do this by providing the process used for data analysis in this chapter, and providing data excerpts alongside my interpretations in Chapter 4. The post-positivist equivalent to this is objectivity, which means the research is free of personal bias and judgement (Mertens, 2010). While this can not be completely eliminated in constructivist research, the confirmability audit allows the reader to determine for themselves if the research conclusions are supported by the data or influenced by researcher biases (Mertens, 2010).

Narrative inquiry

More specifically, my research was guided by narrative inquiry, a methodological approach that falls within the constructivist paradigm. Narrative research aims to understand the meaning that lived experiences hold for individuals by interpreting the stories they tell (Polkinghorne, 2007). It is based on the belief that humans make sense of their experiences through stories (Mueller, 2019). A benefit to using narrative inquiry is that "humans are natural storytellers" (Butina, 2015, p. 191). Communicating through storytelling is prevalent across cultures and generations. Sandelowski (1991, p. 162) describes narrative inquiry as a way to "naturalise" the research process because it parallels the way individuals view their own experiences. Thus, participants are free to share their experiences in their own words, rather than responding to specific questions (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Generally, the researcher will ask a broad, open-ended question designed to elicit stories, and the participant then has control over what stories to tell, in what order, and in their preferred level of detail (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Narrative interviews involve minimal interruption from the researcher, though they may ask follow up questions for clarification when the participant is finished sharing (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). A second benefit of narrative inquiry is that stories inherently contain rich context and meaning (Butina, 2015). For example, stories often include characters, a location, a timeline, and a moral of the story or values (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Narrative research is traditionally known to focus on life narratives or stories that are wide in scope (Mueller, 2019), but in this study I was interested in stories centering on a specific phenomenon: parent experiences of HIPPY with regard to parent-child relationships. Therefore, I chose episodic narrative interviewing as a suitable approach. This approach integrates narrative interviewing with semi-structured interviewing and episodic interviewing (Mueller, 2019). It can be described as requests for small, targeted stories, focused on a particular phenomenon (Mueller, 2019). Episodic narrative interviewing allows for a larger sample size than narrative research typically does, as there is a greater focus on the phenomenon of study than the context in which the phenomenon exists (Mueller, 2019). As can be seen in the Interview Guide (Appendix E. Interview guide), I asked participants about changes they have experienced in relation to participating in HIPPY, followed by prompts for examples that describe these changes.

Mueller (2019, p. 6) explains the interview process as, "at its essence, a request for stories." I was interested to hear participants relate to the research topic using real examples in their own words, to bring the topic to life.

3.1.2. Researcher positionality

Constructivist research rejects the assumption that researchers are detached from and objective in their research (Milner, 2007). Instead, constructivism acknowledges the researcher as a person with values, beliefs, and lived experiences that can influence the research. Therefore, it is important that I disclose my social positionality and motivations for researching this topic.

Power and privilege

In multiple ways, I am an outsider from my study population and have power and privilege that this population does not. My study participants are newcomer parents who have participated in HIPPY, whereas I am Canadian-born, English-speaking, white, and without children, and I have not participated in HIPPY. My participants occupy multiple marginalised and intersecting identities. All ten participants were women, international immigrants, and spoke English as an additional language. Most participants were people of colour. Because of this, they have likely experienced intersectional racism, sexism, oppression, and discrimination that I have not. They have also experienced hardships that I have not, given they have moved across countries, cultures, and languages. Several participants mentioned the challenges of being away from their social support systems, learning English, and not knowing about the Canadian education system. On top of this, participants were in the midst of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic as parents of young children, and discussed the myriad of challenges that came along with this. My social positionality overlaps with my participants in that I am a woman, live in Canada, and have a post-secondary level education (nine of ten participants had a Bachelor's or Master's degree, though I acknowledge that post-secondary education acquired outside of Canada is often devalued once in Canada).

I am also in a position of power as a researcher. Even though qualitative research aims to lower the power differential between researcher and participant, an

imbalance of power remains at each stage in the research process (Karnieli-Miller et al.,
2009). In addition, invisible and unpredictable risks are always present when
researchers conduct research with cultural groups they are not a part of (Milner, 2007). I
was guided by Milner's (2007) framework in navigating researcher positionality as it
relates to race and culture to minimise these risks. This framework involves self
reflection on my cultural background, research on my study population's cultural
backgrounds, reporting a balanced representation of researcher and participant
perspectives in the findings, and consideration of systems that uphold racism and
oppression (Milner, 2007).

Ethical considerations

I took multiple actions to be ethical and respectful towards my participants with
regards to these power imbalances. For one, I consulted with the Mothers Matter Centre
while designing the study, as they were very familiar with the study population, to ensure
the proposed research was appropriate and valuable to this community. As Canada has
two branches of HIPPY, Indigenous HIPPY and Multicultural HIPPY, we agreed that this
research would be suitable to conduct with Multicultural HIPPY only. This was due to my
positionality as a non-Indigenous researcher, and the ongoing harm done to Indigenous
communities by non-Indigenous individuals and institutions. This was aligned with my
commitment to produce research that is beneficial, and does no harm to the community
(Karnieli-Miller, 2009).

To ensure informed consent, I emailed consent forms prior to scheduling an
interview. I did this to allow participants sufficient time to read, understand, and ask
questions about the purpose and expectations of the study and to remove the risk of
participants feeling pressured to consent in the moment, before participating in their
interview. In addition, no aspect of the study was withheld from participants. The consent
forms and interview guide were written and conducted in plain language, to make sure
that participants with lower levels of English proficiency could understand (Karnieli-Miller,
2009). In accordance with ongoing consent, I asked participants again at the start of the
interview if they had any questions or concerns about the study before participating. At
this time I also asked participants a second time for their verbal consent to record the

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interview. Participants were reminded that they could share as much or as little as they were comfortable with, and could pass on questions they did not want to answer.

There were no expected costs in participating, as interviews took place over Zoom at a date, time, and location that was convenient for participants. There were also no expected social or emotional risks in participating. Data were anonymized and each participant chose or was given a pseudonym to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Further, no questions were expected to trigger uncomfortable emotions or memories. All participants recieved a $50 honorarium as a thank you for their time and contribution. This gift was suggested by the Mothers Matter Centre as an appropriate way to reimburse participants.

I aimed to develop rapport with my participants to increase participants' sense of safety. I used basic counselling skills such as paraphrasing, validation, normalisation, and nonverbal prompts. This helps individuals to feel comfortable sharing, and tell a story that feels accurate and authentic to them. I also aimed to be attuned to the participant's experience, in order to prioritise their comfort and help them to feel in control of their interview. If I sensed any discomfort in relation to certain topics, I did not pry further. As discussed, I used narrative interviewing, which allows participants to share the stories they are comfortable with and are most salient to them. Further, I aimed to follow the lead of the participant (Mertens, 2010), meaning interviews varied in length and depth, as some participants were more talkative or passionate about the topic than others.

As mentioned, I used member checking to confirm that participants were comfortable with the data they had shared. In reporting the findings I used participants' words as often as possible, to make sure their meaning remained intact (Karnieli-Miller, 2009). I aimed to provide a thick description of the context, research process, as well as my own social positionality, values, and motivations related to this research topic (Karnieli-Miller, 2009). Finally, upon completion of the study, a one-page summary of the research was written in plain language and distributed to participants via email, for them to see the final result of their contribution. They will also receive instructions on how to access the full thesis online.

Researcher motivations

My interest in this topic began while completing a six-month internship with the Mothers Matter Centre. As I learnt about HIPPY during this internship, I particularly valued the structure of the program, in which parents are instructed to spend part of every day doing an educational activity with their child. I already felt passionate about the importance of healthy family relationships and attachment theory due to my training as a counselling student and previous work experience with families. I knew the program was primarily a school readiness program for children and a social resource for parents, but I thought that HIPPY might be doing even more for families than it claimed to. For instance, I imagined that this program format would be beneficial for parents because it provided an opportunity to spend time with their child in a new way every day, while providing a front-row seat to their child's learning. I also imagined that children would enjoy this special one-on-one time that can often get missed in a hectic household with young children. For both parents and children, I imagined that routinely exploring something new together would provide the opportunity for playfulness and potentially bring out different sides of the parent and child. As I reviewed the literature on HIPPY, it struck me that there was little acknowledgement of this. This motivated me to follow my curiosities about this topic for my thesis. I thought that no matter the findings, HIPPY had the potential to be used in the future as an intervention to support positive parent-child relationships.

3.1.3. Demographic questionnaire

I chose to include a quantitative element of data in the form of a 12-question demographic questionnaire (Appendix D. Demographic questionnaire). The demographic questionnaire requested information on participants' age, family composition, location, time spent in Canada, home country, educational background, household income, and duration of HIPPY participation. The purpose of gathering this information was to provide context, as it provided a snapshot of each participant's personal background and history with HIPPY. As mentioned, providing context is linked to improved rigour in qualitative research under the criterion of transferability (Mertens, 2010). It also helped to verify that participants met the inclusion criteria of having completed at least one year in HIPPY. The demographic questionnaire was completed

before the interviews, which allowed the interview to be more focused on the research topic. In addition, it allowed me to learn about each participant before interviewing them, which helped to build rapport and tailor questions to be more specific to each participant and their family. Participant demographic information is summarised at the end of this chapter.

3.2. Procedure

3.2.1. Collaboration with the Mothers Matter Centre

I collaborated with the Mothers Matter Centre, home of HIPPY Canada, in designing this research project. As mentioned, I completed a six-month internship with them, where I became acquainted with HIPPY, the existing literature on this program, and the staff at the Mothers Matter Centre. At the end of my internship, I described my research idea to the Mothers Matter Centre's President and Manager of Research and Advocacy, and they agreed that this would be valuable and appropriate research to conduct. They approved my proposed study design and offered to help with recruitment, given their established relationships with HIPPY Coordinators. Following this, I obtained ethics approval to conduct the research by the University Research Ethics Board.

3.2.2. Recruitment

My recruitment strategy was both purposive and convenient (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995). Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific qualities and convenience sampling is based on selecting who is interested on a "first-come, first-served basis" (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995, p. 10). The specific qualities I was interested in, also known as inclusion criteria, for this project were parents who had completed at least one program year of Multicultural HIPPY, within the last two years. The reason for recruiting participants who had participated within the last two years was to increase the likelihood that participants could remember their HIPPY experience in detail, and produce research that was up-to-date with current HIPPY programming. The exclusion criterion was the inability to participate in the interview in English, due to the practical constraints of hiring a translator. I aimed to interview five to ten parents, though

I was open to interviewing more if data saturation was not reached. Data saturation refers to a point in which no new knowledge is being created (Creswell, 2015).

The Mothers Matter Centre has the contact information of all HIPPY Coordinators in Canada, and HIPPY Coordinators have the contact information of participating parents at their site. Therefore, the Mothers Matter Centre offered to reach out to all Multicultural HIPPY Coordinators about the research project, asking them to pass the information about the project along to parents. I wrote two recruitment letters to be distributed through the Mothers Matter Centre: one for HIPPY Coordinators (Appendix A. Recruitment letter to HIPPY coordinators) and one for HIPPY parents (Appendix B. Recruitment letter to HIPPY parents). The Mothers Matter Centre distributed the first letter to Multicultural HIPPY Coordinators via email. This letter included a summary of the proposed research and a request to distribute the second letter to parents from their HIPPY site. The letter to HIPPY parents included a summary of the proposed research, requirements of participation, the honorarium offered, and my contact information for those interested in participating.

I received emails from 15 parents expressing their interest to participate in the research, and I sent consent forms (Appendix C. Consent form) to the first ten who reached out. This was the convenience aspect of my recruitment strategy (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995). One parent chose not to participate after reading the consent form, so I reached out to the next interested parent. Participants signed and returned their consent forms to me via email. I told the remaining interested parents that the spots were full. Data saturation was reached after ten interviews, so I did not conduct further recruitment.

3.2.3. Data collection

Upon gaining informed consent, I sent participants the Demographic Questionnaire via email to be completed, and together we scheduled a time that would work for the interview. From October to December 2021, I conducted a one-on-one interview with each participant. Interviews took place over Zoom to accommodate interviews with parents from across Canada, and ensure safety during COVID-19 public health measures.

I used a general interview guide approach (Appendix E. Interview guide), using an outline of questions to ensure key topics were covered (Butina, 2015). Prior to conducting the first interview, I did a mock interview with a staff member from the Mothers Matter Centre to test my interview guide and practice interviewing. I started the interviews with a general open-ended question about the family's experience in HIPPY. This was followed by several open-ended questions focused on parents' perceived impacts of HIPPY on the parent-child relationship, family, parent, and child(ren). I used probing and follow-up questions to ask for supporting stories and examples (Butina, 2015). I asked an additional question related to the COVID-19 pandemic, to understand the role that this played in participants' experiences, as well as a question about any challenges experienced during participation between parent and child. I then closed the interviews with two broad concluding questions. As is common in constructivist research, some interview questions were adjusted throughout the process of interviewing, depending on what came up (Mertens, 2010). The interviews were 40 to 60 minutes in length, based on participants' availability and how much they had to share. They took place on weekdays and weekends, and at different times of the day. One participant did not fluently speak English and had her husband present during the interview to translate for her. In another interview, one participant's husband joined in to answer a few questions from his perspective.

Interviews were recorded using Zoom's recording feature. I then used Otter, an online transcription service to transcribe each interview. I went through each transcription generated by Otter while listening to the interviews to check for accuracy and fix errors. This required multiple listens for each interview. Next, I completed member checking by emailing each participant the transcription of their interview. One participant provided grammar edits to increase the clarity of their message, and the remaining participants did not make any changes to their transcription. Identifying information was removed from the transcriptions to ensure confidentiality.

3.2.4. Data analysis

I was guided by Braun and Clark's (2006) model of thematic analysis to analyse my qualitative data set. Thematic analysis is a method of acknowledging patterns of

meaning found across a data set, to generate a detailed description of some aspect of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researchers play an active role during this process as they identify and analyse patterns within the data that are of interest to them, typically based on their research questions, and report these patterns as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) provide six phases as a guideline to conducting thematic analysis. They note that this is a recursive, rather than linear, process that involves going back and forth between steps. These steps are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1.   Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

In Phase one of this process called "Familiarising yourself with the data," I listened to, transcribed, and read, and re-read the interview data, while making notes of my initial impressions for codes. Phase two is "Generating initial codes." Codes refer to basic, yet meaningful elements of raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase I carefully went through each line of the interview transcripts and created corresponding codes. I coded the data manually, as opposed to using qualitative data analysis

software. I also coded all of the data rather than select data in effort not to miss any patterns or unexpected elements of the data. An example of my coding process is displayed in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, data extracts often have multiple codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The third phase is called "Searching for themes." During this phase, I created a master list of all codes from the data and sorted these into categories. Categories of codes were then organised into potential themes and subthemes. The third column of Table 2 displays the corresponding themes for each code. As I worked on these steps, I had discussions with my supervisor and sent her the transcriptions, codes, and themes to improve the quality of the analysis (Butina, 2015).

Table 2.   **Generating codes and themes**

Extracts from interview transcripts	Codes	Themes
"Now they know everyday there's some time, just the mommy, fully. Like fully, she's ready to hear you and she's always with me. She's focused on me. So they know I am concentrating one hundred percent on the HIPPY activities, like ten minutes, twenty minutes every day. Yeah, that's a big change."	- Parent is focused on child during HIPPY - New routine of parent-child time together	- HIPPY encourages child-centred quality time
"Sometimes they do a lot of mistakes because they don't have any concept of a long vowel or a short vowel. At first, "I told you yesterday!" But now, I have changed. Like, "Okay, let's try again. Okay, let mother read it first and then you can follow up." Something like that. So I do not scream, I don't yell. I understand because they are learning."	- Parent is becoming more patient towards child - Parent is using encouragement - Parent is reducing harsh parenting behaviours - Parent is understanding and accepting of child's pace of learning	- HIPPY fosters positive parenting approaches
Because I'm working right? So when you are working you don't have a lot of time when you're not working, and imagination to think, "Okay, what activity I'm going to do with Sara today?" Sometimes I don't have time for me. So how can I look for activities, what I need to do, and also follow her progress? I will not be able to do it. So HIPPY makes my life easy.	- HIPPY saves parent's time and energy - HIPPY reduces parent's number of tasks - HIPPY allows parent to follow child's progress	- HIPPY supports newcomer parents

Phase four, "Reviewing themes," includes two levels (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Level one involves examining themes in relation to the original data extracts. During this step, some extracts were moved to other themes, some themes were combined, and some themes were removed entirely. Level two involves checking that the themes make sense in relation to the entire data set. As recommended, I re-read all ten interviews to do this, and checked for additional extracts that may have been missed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Phase five is called "Defining and naming themes," where themes and subthemes are officially established and are situated within an overarching story. Themes are carefully named at this stage for clarity. Last, phase six is "Producing the report", where the story of the data is told alongside examples, in relation to the research questions and existing literature. This takes place in Chapter 4.

3.3. Participants

Table 3 summarises the ten participants' demographic information based on their demographic questionnaire. The following paragraphs provide a description of each participant at the time the interview was conducted.

Table 3.   Participant demographic information

Gender	Age	Number of children	Number of children in HIPPY	Children in HIPPY's ages	Region in Canada
Women (10)	30-34 (5) 35-39 (3) 40-44 (2)	1 child (1) 2 children (6) 3 children (3)	1 child (6) 2 children (4)	3 years old (2) 4 years old (4) 5 years old (6) 6 years old (1) 7 years old (1)	Central (5) Prairies (4) North (1)

Relationship status	Highest formal education	Annual household income	Years of HIPPY completed	Years lived in Canada	Region of origin

| Single (1)
Married (9) | High school (1)
College or
university (9) | 0-20k (2)
40-60k (6)
Over 60k (2) | 1 year (8)
2 years (2) | 1 year (1)
2 years (5)
4 years (1)
5 years (1)
7 years (2) | North America (2)
South America (2)
Middle East (1)
East Asia (3)
South Asia (2) |

Kate is a 36-year-old mother living with her family of four in a city in Central Canada. She has one son and one daughter, ages four and six. Kate has participated in HIPPY with both of her children, and is entering her third year of participating in HIPPY. Kate and her family have been living in Canada for over two years. They immigrated from East Asia, where Kate completed a Bachelor's degree. Kate chose to participate in HIPPY to learn how to teach her children English.

Olinda is a 34-year-old mother from East Asia, now living in a city in Northern Canada. Olinda lives with her husband and three children ages three, five, and seven. Olinda has lived in Canada for almost two and a half years, and has completed one year of HIPPY with her daughter. Olinda is now starting her second year of HIPPY with her daughter and starting her first year of HIPPY with one of her sons. Olinda has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering from her home country. Olinda started HIPPY to prepare her children for school and help her children learn English.

Zahra is a 32-year-old mother of three children ages five, ten, and thirteen. Zahra has completed one year of HIPPY with her youngest son, and is now starting her second year with him. Zahra lives with her husband and children in a city in the Prairies. They moved to Canada around two and a half years ago, from a country in the Middle East. Zahra has a high school education.

Joyce is a 32-year-old mother of her son and daughter, ages two and four. Joyce is from East Asia and currently living with her husband and children in a city in the Prairies. They have been in Canada for one and a half years. She has completed one year of HIPPY with her daughter and is entering her second year with her. Joyce was introduced to HIPPY by her friend, and chose to sign up to help her daughter learn English. Joyce has a Master's degree in Engineering from her home country.

Chiku is a 39-year-old mother of two children ages five and eight, living in a city in the Prairies. Chiku, her husband, and children moved to Canada over two years ago from South Asia. Chiku completed a Master of Business Administration degree in her home country. She has completed one year of HIPPY with her five-year-old daughter, and is now beginning her second program year with her. Chiku started HIPPY because she was interested in learning new approaches to teaching her child and was attracted to the accessibility of the program. Chiku now works as a HIPPY Home Visitor.

Aden is a 40-year-old mother living in a city in the Prairies with her husband and two children, ages one and five. Aden has completed one year of HIPPY with her five-year-old son and is now in her second year with him. Aden has been in Canada for over two years. She is from South Asia, where she acquired a Master of Science degree. Aden joined HIPPY to learn about the Canadian education system.

Mukisa is a 43-year-old mother living in a city in Central Canada. She lives with her husband and three children. She has a seven-year-old, five-year-old, and a baby under one. Mukisa has participated in HIPPY with her two oldest children for the last two years. She is now beginning her third year of HIPPY. Mukisa and her family are from the Caribbean and have been in Canada for seven years. She also has a post-secondary education.

Elida is a 35-year-old mother with a four-year-old daughter. Elida and her daughter live in a city in Central Canada. They have lived in Canada for over four years, and have participated in HIPPY for one year. Elida and her daughter are now in their second year of HIPPY. Elida's home country is in South America, where she completed a Bachelor's degree. Elida joined HIPPY to learn new ways of teaching and playing with her daughter.

Laura is 32-year-old mother with two sons, ages two and three. Laura lives with her husband and children in a city in Central Canada. They moved to Canada from South America five years ago. Laura has completed one year of HIPPY with her oldest son, and they are now in their second year. Laura has a university education.

Salma is a 33-year-old mother with two daughters, ages four and five. Salma and her family are from Central America and moved to Canada almost eight years ago. Salma lives with her husband and kids in a city in Central Canada. She has a Bachelor of Education degree and works as an English teacher for individuals learning English as an additional language. She has completed one year of HIPPY with each of her children, and is now starting a second year with them.

Chapter 4.   Findings

This research sought to answer the primary question: how do parents make meaning of their participation in HIPPY as it relates to the parent-child relationship? This chapter reports on the findings. Interviews with HIPPY mothers were transcribed and analyzed for common themes, and this chapter outlines each theme with quotations from the interviews as supporting evidence. All names including participants, their partners, and their children are pseudonyms.

Across all interviews, parents described increased parent-child closeness related to participating in HIPPY. This occurred through several pathways, summarized below in Figure 3. The yellow boxes in Figure 3 represent each theme and their subthemes. The themes are: 1) HIPPY supports parent-child closeness, 2) HIPPY encourages child-centred quality time, 3) HIPPY fosters positive parenting approaches, 4) HIPPY provides an enjoyable curriculum, and 5) HIPPY supports newcomer parents. The blue boxes in Figure 3 represent the relationship between each theme, also known as process factors. Each blue box is related to one another and supports the main finding that HIPPY supports parent-child closeness.
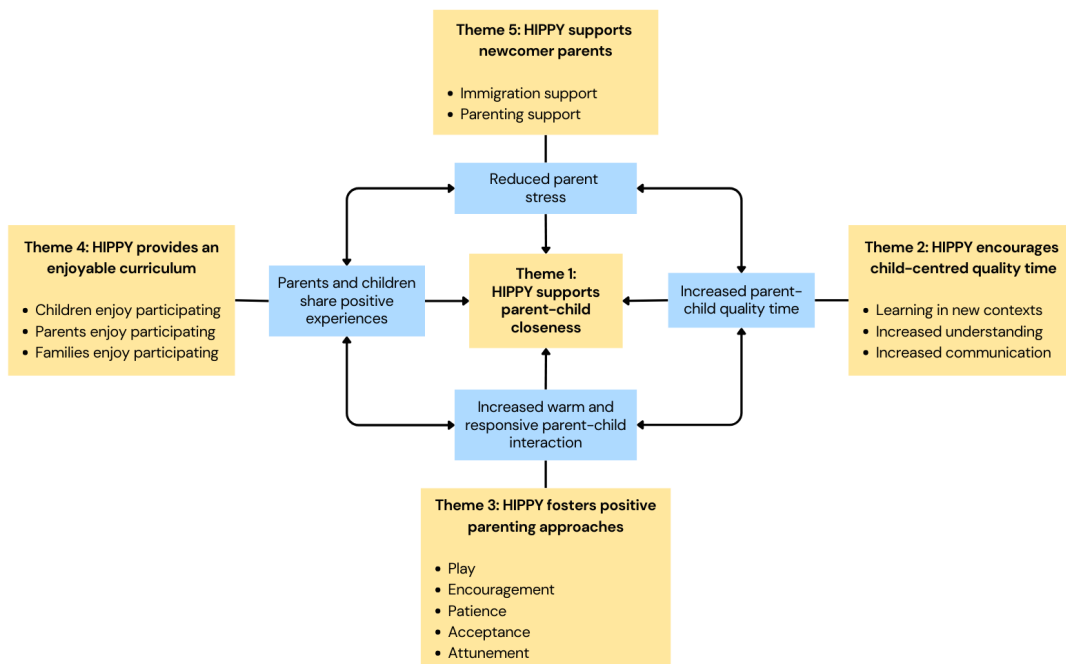
Figure 3.   Summary of findings

4.1. HIPPY supports parent-child closeness

All participants reported experiencing positive relational shifts between themselves and their children. Most stated outright that participating in HIPPY led to an improved relationship or increased feelings of closeness. For example, when asked, "How do you think participating in HIPPY has impacted your relationship with your child?" Olinda responded, "We are becoming very closer," since participating in HIPPY, which she attributed to sharing positive experiences together. "We are doing all the activities together" and having "fun," she said. Salma agreed. She expressed, "It has made us closer, at least the girls and myself." She explained, "the emotional part" of HIPPY "is highly valuable to me, the attachment." She felt they were closer because they were "all working towards the same goal" and felt a sense of "unity" and "teamwork." When considering what life might look like without HIPPY, she shared:

> We mothers love our children more than anything in our life. So does my husband, like there is nothing, in terms of love, that doesn't change. But in terms of connection, in terms of understanding, in terms of seeing them grow, the way they've grown with the program. That's what we would have missed.

Joyce believed that she and her daughter were "becoming closer" as well. She suggested that her daughter had started to see her differently since they began playing together in HIPPY. In her words:

> Maybe we are more like friends? Yes. Because we always play roles like in the books. And she wants to me to be her friends, like 'Elephant and the Piggy' or 'Sam and Stella.' And so she most likely to think I'm her friend.

Kate described her son as more "attached" to her since moving to Canada and starting HIPPY. She said that participating in HIPPY is when she began to "feel the relationship is changing a bit." One change she noticed was that her son now asks to read with her before going to bed. She shared, "He loves reading time with me. So now, he's very attached with me and he always at bed time, he always want me. That's a big change." When Mukisa was asked how HIPPY impacted her relationships with her children, she

shared, "In terms of impacting the relationship, of course, it was for the better." She explained that she joined HIPPY to help with her children's learning, but "the connection" she experienced with them "was a surprise." Mukisa also believed her children felt comfortable with her and her husband and enjoyed spending time them:

> I would like to think that they feel that they can come to us. Or they can count on us. Not just to remind them to brush their teeth, but at least to take out a book, and make something, and yeah, just be with them.

Both Laura and Chiku also recognized a shift in their relationship as they changed the way they interacted with their children. Laura said, "I create with my son a good relationship," during HIPPY, "especially when I read the books, because my son likes to read a lot of books." She shared that prior to HIPPY, she would often tell her son what to do rather than do activities with him. She took his perspective, "My mother normally say to me, 'Do that, do that!' Now my mother do, and show me how is the best way." Considering his point of view she thought, "He is feeling more connection with me. Like, 'Oh my mother played with me.'" As a result, she felt that HIPPY had an "excellent impact" on their relationship. Chiku felt similarly. She described a "different kind of bond" with her daughter since participating in HIPPY. She believed her children see her differently since she started playing and doing activities with them:

> My son used to say, "Mommy, why you are always angry with me?" [laughs] I used to be a strict mom. But now I am playing with them and teaching so it's different for them. So they say, 'Mommy, you're a cool mom now!'

Finally, Elida simply stated, "This program is helping me with the relationship with my kid," which she felt was a valuable aspect of HIPPY.

Analysis of the interviews revealed that these relational changes were supported by structural features of the program that positively altered family routines, parenting approaches, and family well-being. The remaining themes speak to how parent-child closeness was fostered through HIPPY.

4.2. HIPPY encourages child-centred quality time

One way in which HIPPY supported parent-child closeness was through increased quality time. It was clear across all interviews that participation in HIPPY encourages parents to spend frequent, meaningful time with their children. Several parents reported that they had always valued spending quality time with their children, but that HIPPY provided the structure and guidance for this to occur, helping them commit to setting time aside. HIPPY provides five new activities for parents to do with their children every week, creating a daily routine of being present and focused on their child. Salma shared, for example:

> I love how HIPPY gives me that opportunity to always sit with them. Because, we mothers - like they're only 18, 19 months apart - so as you can imagine, we do have a pretty busy life in terms of go here, go there. When this one started school, she was at home. When she was only a year, her sister was born. So it has always been on the go, go, go. So I like how I get to sit, even ten, fifteen minutes, and just be with them. Just be for them.

Referring to her priority of spending time with her children, she said, "[HIPPY] has made me, not only a more disciplined, organized, but a more focused person on what I want." Laura had a similar experience in that HIPPY also allowed her to prioritize quality time with her children:

> That is the one thing that these kind of activities help, to take time. Because when you are a mother, when you are a mother you have a lot of things to do at home. Yes. You need to take time for you, for your husband, do the things for at home, to cleaning, to prepare cooking. But this one is like, okay, you need time for your kids, but a good time to sit down everyone, to do something, simple. To take time to teach something because you create more relations.

She believed, "Taking the time for your child is the best way, the best investment that you can do with your child. Because you're creating more relation, you understand more the behaviour." Therefore, HIPPY helped her to align her parenting values with her behaviours. Elida also discussed how HIPPY helped her to spend meaningful time with her daughter. She shared, "I don't want that in the small time that we have, she watches

TV. I don't want that. I want to spend time with my daughter, a beautiful time, time that she loves." She added, "now HIPPY provides me something that I can use for sharing time with my daughter." Elida recognized that HIPPY goes beyond preparing children for school, because it encourages spending time together as parent and child. She considered that HIPPY could instead, "provide me a tablet, okay, go to this website, I look for this book, and put on YouTube this book that someone reads," but was glad it was not this way. She noted, "The way that HIPPY is teaching us is different. But it's key. I think that the goal of HIPPY program is spend time with your daughter. I think this is the key." Elida believed quality time was an essential part of the program. She added:

> Because I prefer to spend time with my daughter, teaching something nice, playing, right? Not teaching as a teacher as old school, right? No, not like the teacher, 'You need to read everything and that's it.' No. Like, we are going to share time together.

Several parents reported that teaching their children was a new way for them to spend time together. Kate, for example, explained that prior to participating in HIPPY, she did not teach her children at home, "They just went to kindergarten and that's it." However, HIPPY allowed her to create a new routine of spending focused time with her children everyday. She explained that she is fully present during this time and her children can count on this:

> After school, yeah, every day we do like ten, twenty minutes HIPPY activities. So now they know everyday there's some time, just the mommy, fully. Like fully, she's ready to hear you and she's always with me. She's focused on me. So they know I am concentrating one hundred percent on the HIPPY activities, like ten minutes, twenty minutes every day. Yeah, that's a big change.

In addition, Kate was happy to notice that her children enjoyed spending this time with her. She said, "The good thing is, my children love to spend the time with me." She said her daughter will say, "Mommy I want to do HIPPY with you." Joyce was another mother who found HIPPY helpful in creating a new routine of spending time with her daughter. She shared, "Doing the HIPPY activities, you must read a book for your children because they can't read a book. So actually, for me, it's a good habit to be reading a book every day for my children." She repeated, "I always make time to read the book

and do the activities with them." This was a big change from her previous routine in her home country where she worked full-time. She said, "Before that, I had been working like ten years, so I never focused on bringing up my children." Without HIPPY, she imagined, "I would not use so much time to focus on her" and "I think the relationship would be not so good because I don't spend so much time for her." This was new for Olinda as well. HIPPY introduced a different way to spend time with her daughter, and a different approach to learning than she was used to. She explained:

> Usually the way it works, the kids go to the school and they learn from school. But in this case, I'm the main teacher and we are doing it together. But they do not think about what I'm teaching, and I'm not thinking about teaching as well, just that we are learning together, having fun, they're learning from each other.

Two additional participants appreciated having new ways to spend time with their children through HIPPY. For example, Aden said, "After participating in HIPPY, I have more time to interact with him, in more ways." She enjoyed having "a lot of activities" to do with her son now, because this gave her more opportunities to connect and interact with him. Mukisa appreciated this as well, and spoke about this aspect of the program at length. She said, "It does give us more opportunities to work together, connect together." She was glad to realize that "all of the activities are an opportunity to connect, and explore something together in a new way," with her two children. This changed her perspective about teaching as she learnt, "it's possible to connect through teaching." Mukisa said she used to take her son to local "drop-in centers for kids," but was not able to do this with her daughter. She said, "It didn't fit into my schedule the way it had before with my son." Fortunately, HIPPY provided another opportunity to spend structured quality time with her. She said, "It was nice to have these activities with her because then we had an intention for the day. It was intentional. It was an opportunity for her to shine through as well. In an equally structured way." She added that it was harder to create these intentional moments without HIPPY, "It didn't matter how many times they bought workbooks from the dollar store, or craft supplies, if we didn't really have something intentional to do it with." When asked what life may look like without HIPPY, Mukisa shared:

I don't know. I mean, sometimes I think that there would be a gap. A mysterious gap. Like, how did they grow up so fast? Or, why do I have all the, I mean, I literally have untouched books, workbooks from outside of HIPPY that even on a good day we don't do. So I think there would just be a gap. A question mark. That's a big question mark. Like a gray area, like, what do we do that summer? What do we do that week?

HIPPY allowed Muksia and her family to create positive memories within the structure of HIPPY, which she highly valued. She said, "When they learn something, and then we have an experience, they kind of hold it as a memory, right? And so it was the best actually to have that together." She recognized that her children value her time and presence with them as well, "I think that's all they want anyway, just to be with us."

Within this theme of HIPPY encouraging child-centred quality time, there are three subthemes: 1) Learning in new contexts, 2) Increased communication, and 3) Increased understanding.

4.2.1. Learning in new contexts

One reason for increased quality time was that HIPPY taught parents that they could teach their children in contexts that they had not considered previously. This opened up additional opportunities for connection. Several parents explained that they were used to learning while "sitting down at the table," whereas HIPPY involved activities that could be done while cooking or on a walk, for example. The mothers appreciated the integration of learning and playing with their usual day-to-day tasks because this approach was easy to integrate into their lives. For instance, Chiku shared, "In HIPPY there are some things like when you're cooking, or when you're walking with your child, or when you're driving your kid, you can talk. You can teach them something. So that method I adopted." She learnt that she could teach her daughter beyond the context of sitting down with books. "You don't have to sit and teach them," she said. She provided an example of helping her daughter with her vocabulary while cooking:

It's not like you have to stick in one place, and with the book and teacher. You can also teach when you're doing other things. While cooking also. I used to say, "Oh what is this? This is chili powder. What is this?" Vegetable names she used to forget. So I'm not sitting with

her, I'm cooking. And, "I forgot tomato, can you get tomatoes from the fridge?" Then she says, "Oh this is tomato!" Now she knows which is tomato and which is capsicum. There's a different way of teaching things.

Chiku told another story about teaching her daughter to spell while they were in the car, "When we are driving, if stop signs come I simply say, "I see there's a stop sign. So what is written?" and her daughter was receptive to this. For example, "B U S, it will be written on the bus," and her daughter started asking, "Is that the spelling of bus?" "So she started spelling while going for a drive and all that," Chiku summarized. Elida also began integrating her daily tasks with lessons for her daughter. She discussed, "HIPPY teach me everything that you are doing in your normal life is helping you to teach your daughter." She provided an example of this while baking cupcakes:

> So when I asked her to make the cupcakes, well, the program said you need to take measure, you need to tell your kid that you are going to take one cup, you are going to allow her that they mix, etcetera, etcetera. And I say, "Oh my God. I always make cupcakes, but I never expect that I can involve Sara to my routine, to my chores." I never think about it. So, HIPPY give me the tools again.

This made Elida's life easier, as she did not have to worry about supervising her daughter while doing these household tasks. In her words, "You are not going to say, 'Sara, what are you doing? Play!' You are not screaming about your daughter, 'What are you doing? You're going to fall down! Please!' Etcetera, etcetera." Instead, cooking became both a learning and a bonding experience. She continued:

> If you are going to cook, you can ask your child to help you right? And at this moment, you are going to explain what are you doing… And now you are cooking, you are spending time with your daughter, and at the end, she's learning, you are learning.

This approach was new for Laura as well. She shared a similar sentiment as previous mothers, "It's not just like you sit down with your child and do something" and it does not have to be a "book" or a "craft," because it can be "around the house." Laura enjoyed this approach. She said, "That is a thing that I like too. To involve curriculum things at home and the normal life."

Moreover, Mukisa appreciated that her children became comfortable participating in household tasks since participating in HIPPY. She said they had started to ask her and her husband "to be a part of" what they were "already working on." For example, she said, "If we are working on cooking, if we are working on fixing tiles, or cleaning something out, they have this confidence to jump in and participate in real life work" because these activities are "similar to some of the activities within HIPPY homework." Kate enjoyed this aspect of HIPPY as well. She said, "It's a fun way and it's a very easy way" to teach her children because it involved "real life" activities that could be done around the house like "collecting the leaves" outside. She liked that it is "not just turning the YouTube on for my children." Joyce agreed, "I would have never thought to go to school outside," before HIPPY. Another participant who enjoyed teaching her children outside was Aden. She said, "When we are going out also, they guide us." She added, "I can teach my son whenever I go out. Whatever I can show him, like, how can I explain to them the environment, and everything, the animals, and the plants, like that." Aden was teaching her children in new ways and about more topics. She shared:

> So actually, if I teach by myself, I always teach him writing, writing, writing. But it's not like that. They teach me to talk, sing, learn, and learn from the environment, listen from the environment. And they can observe, and they can participate in the cooking, and the communication.

She found it beneficial that her son was learning through new methods. She said, "He is improving himself, not only the reading, or writing, he is improving his knowledge, most of that through observation and listening and learning and playing."

4.2.2. Increased communication

In the context of these routine quality interactions, participants noticed increased communication between themselves and their children. They shared that their children were openly initiating conversation about their inner worlds, indicating a sense of comfort in them. For instance, Elida shared that she used to have trouble engaging her daughter in conversation. She was curious about her daughter's experience at school and would ask, "What did you do at the school Sara? What did you do at the school?" Sara

provided minimal responses such as, "Nothing, playing," and Elida thought, "Okay, they are playing all day." However, Elida noticed that her daughter was more likely to open up when they were doing activities together. She shared, "So then I figured out with HIPPY, that when I'm sharing time with her, sharing time with her allow her to be free and easy, and without asking, telling me everything!" She continued, "It's amazing! It's like, you don't need to ask, 'What did you do at school?' Just make some activities, and then you learn about them." Elida was grateful to learn this. She said, "If you don't have HIPPY, maybe you are not going to do this activity, and you are not going to learn what Sara knows, thinks, etcetera." Chiku had the same experience. She also noticed that her daughter began sharing her thoughts and ideas during HIPPY activities. Chiku said she used to be hesitant to try new activities with her, but once she started, her daughter began freely talking with her. Chiku explained:

> Whenever she used to ask me to do science, I said "No, don't do that." I was afraid, "No, don't do that, you are a small kid. We should not do that." If my son is doing some things, I said "No, no, no, don't do that." Then I started. Then HIPPY was giving all this, like how to make a playdoh, and how to make a volcano, I started doing. She started talking with me. She started sharing her thoughts with me. Then, "Oh, we can do like this," "I saw on TV, we can do it like this." She started, like, the attachment was there, but the communication, it improved a lot.

Kate's children were initiating communication more often as well. She explained that they were learning to talk more about their emotions in HIPPY, putting their "feelings in words," which she believed was related to them becoming more open with her in general, even outside of HIPPY. She said, "Not only the activities," but "all day, they're more likely to talk to me." Joyce shared something similar. She explained that her daughter spontaneously tells her "a lot" about school. For example, "She'll go, 'Oh, someone brought yogurt today, someone brought sushi today'" and "Oh, my friend wore a Rapunzel costume" for Halloween. Joyce believed her daughter would not "tell me so much about her friends" if they had not participated in HIPPY. Aden also noticed this phenomenon. When asked for an example, she shared that her son once told her that he recognized a book at school from HIPPY. She said, "He immediately came and told me, 'Mom, Mom, we learned the same book today.'"

In some cases, mothers noted that they were the ones initiating more conversation with their children since participating in HIPPY. For example, Aden noticed that HIPPY helped her to have more diverse conversations with her son, by discussing topics that she had otherwise not considered talking with him about. In her words:

> Now we have more time to talk, in more ways. Not only the "ABCD," alphabet, not like that. We are talking our environment, our community, our family, and relationships, like that. A lot of things they are introducing to talk to my kid.

Chiku also learnt new ways to practice conversation with her daughter. She discussed how she used to read to her children compared to the approaches she learnt in HIPPY:

> If you give me the book, we will simply read it to the kid. That's what we do. But we never knew. Now you have to give the book to your child and ask them to think about the book.

She said, "In HIPPY they say, 'You should not read the story to them. Show the cover page, show the pictures inside the book, and then ask them what it is. Ask them to tell their own stories,'" and, "We have to ask them, 'Oh what do you think? What happened in this book?'" Chiku said that her daughter now creates her own stories and shares them with her. Mukisa also noted her daughter's improved confidence to engage in conversation. She described her daughter as "introverted," but becoming more comfortable. She is "coming around," she said, and "I'd like to think that HIPPY homework had something to do with that. Because some of the books are very conversational." She continued, "We wouldn't have experienced practicing conversation like that as quickly or as in depth as we could through HIPPY homework."

4.2.3. Increased understanding

Increased quality time fostered parents' understanding of their children. Through frequent interacting and teaching, they had a sense of knowing their child better. These experiences of learning more about them further fed into feelings of closeness to their child, pride in their child, and awe at their child's abilities. Mukisa, for example, noticed each of her children had different strengths. She participated in HIPPY with two of her

children and had a different experience with each of them. She shared, "With my daughter, it helped us to connect through art. And with my son, we connected a lot through the books, and the activities that are attached with them." Through this, Mukisa said she learnt "what they're comfortable with the most." She found it helpful to learn about their strengths and areas for development so she could approach these areas with care. She also noticed what she had in common with them:

> I did get to see how similar my son is to me. And then I was able to see with my daughter, how similar she is to me as well, but in terms of like, hopes and dreams. Whereas my son is more, like with my personality [laughs], where we are headstrong and determined. So that would help us, that would help me at least, navigate a little bit more to respond to their needs.

Salma appreciated the opportunity to learn "a lot" about each of her children's personalities through HIPPY as well. She shared, "I just see them. I have gotten to know so much of their personality, what they like, how they share it, how they see, when they explain things." She spoke about her older daughter, "She's more logical. She's very by the book," and her younger daughter, "She's more the sentimental type, or emotional." Aden noticed her children's differences in ability, "They are growing in different abilities and capacities. And both of my kids are far different. One is at one time while the other one is at another point." While doing HIPPY activities she noticed, "In every moment, I learned from them." She found that learning about her children made it easier to teach them, which is why she was committed to continue learning, "But even still I am learning. So I should learn about them more and more." David, translating for his wife Zahra, spoke about recognizing their son's skills. He said, "She learned from the program how to discover the new abilities of Xavier." For example:

> She noticed that, for example, he has a solving puzzle skill. He is very skillful to form shapes. He's very clever, actually. Without explaining how to play the game to him, he started to solve all the puzzles by himself.

Zahra and David were amazed with their son and found this to be a valuable experience of HIPPY. He said, "We didn't know that he has such talent. This is another benefit that we should thank the program for." Elida enjoyed learning about her daughter's abilities

as well. During one HIPPY activity, she was surprised to notice that her daughter could count to 30. She said:

> I don't know what she is learning because always she is playing. And she say, "Yes, I play and I play." But with this chart, I learn first that she is capable to count until 30. And she recognized the number until 30.

She added, "Before that, I was thinking that she was capable to count until 20." This gave Elida insight into her daughter's experience at school, "So it was just an activity, but from this activity, I know about what she's learning at the school. Now I recognize what she's capable of." She provided examples about discovering her capacity for memory:

> I'm so impressed because sometimes we read this book, like, I don't know, five months ago. And then when we take out again. Sara says, "Oh, Mom, this is the book about that. Did you remember about it?" I said, "Oh my god, you are capable of remembering, that is amazing."

She spoke about another book by an Indigenous author. She shared that some of the words were challenging for her to pronounce, but easy for her daughter:

> Sometimes it was a challenge because even sometimes English for me is difficult. Now you need to learn how to say another word in another language that is completely different for you. So it's a little challenge. But for Sara, it was so easy. She remembered the name, even two weeks after… I don't remember the name but she remembers the name in this dialect.

Elida was also learning about her daughter's preferences through asking her daughter to make choices, such as choosing her favourite colour of paper to use. She said, "So from that, I know that her favourite colour now is pink, right?" Elida enjoyed getting to know her daughter in this way. Another participant who was surprised with her child's capacity for learning and memory was Laura. She said:

> Sometimes he surprises me. Like, "Wow, you remember that!" Like sometimes I did one activity just one time, two months ago. He said to

me, "Mom, it's like that?" And I say, "Yes, wow! You remember. You remember." It is very absorbed. He absorb everything. Everything, everything.

Chiku learnt about her daughter's academic interests. She noticed, "She started loving science. I didn't know that she loved science experiments. So I never knew that."

4.3. HIPPY fosters positive parenting approaches

A second way that HIPPY increased parent-child closeness was through shifts in parenting and teaching approaches. All ten participants described changes to their parenting behaviours, values, or expectations that are known to promote positive relational development. In addition, these changes had transferred beyond HIPPY into daily life. These changes occurred as parents gained an increased understanding of their child, how their child learned best, and child development in general. As they learnt these new parenting approaches through the curriculum and advice of home visitors, their parenting changed to become more playful, responsive, and warm, and less authoritarian. This made learning more of an enjoyable experience for parent and child. This theme contains five subthemes: 1) Play, 2) Encouragement, 3) Patience, 4) Attunement, and 5) Acceptance.

4.3.1. Play

Parents described an increased playfulness with their children since participating in HIPPY. Through the program, some discovered that play was a valuable educational tool and some recognized that it was an enjoyable way to connect.

Chiku and Zahra for example were two participants that were particularly surprised to recognize the effectiveness of incorporating play while teaching. This was a new approach that HIPPY introduced to them. Chiku shared, "When I started, I was amazed. Like, wow, there are different ways of teaching the kids." She said she used to teach her daughter with a simpler, more straightforward approach, "I used to just simply say 'one, two, three, four' like that." However, Chiku learnt through HIPPY that she could incorporate toys and games. She explained, "You can take the toys, which she likes soft

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toys, or it could take plates, or beads, and just count with that," or with "shapes, you can play a game and teach them." Chiku repeatedly expressed her surprise, "I was like, 'Wow, this is different.' I never knew you could do it that way." This helped her daughter to learn and enjoy learning. She shared:

> I used to ask, "How many toys do you have? Let us count." So we started counting, "One, two, three." And then she started developing. And she started showing interest, with the blocks, whatever it is. Then she started doing on her own. So when she's alone, also, she used to take and she started counting.

Chiku was excited to see that learning while having fun was possible. She said, "Because as I told you, I was thinking only this is the way of learning, only this method a child can do. Because that was the only method," referring to her previous approach. She added:

> I didn't know you can even learn through fun. I never knew. And you can do counting by clapping. If you clap like one, two. So that you can teach. You can take any small things, anything from the toys, the beads, you can count.

Zahra and her husband David benefited from using play as a teaching method as well. A focus of their interview was their son's progress in his learning, which they attributed to incorporating more play at home. David shared, "She got new ideas and learned how to deal with Xavier, and that helped in developing his skills. She said now she noticed that Xavier has started to obey her better than before." This was because, "now, helping mom and obeying her is something interesting" for him. He said they were recognizing that "there is a style in learning. Not just 'do this, and do this.' No. Now there is a style." He continued:

> Now you give him the order using a technique. So he will not get it as an order to do, he will receive it like a game and does it with some excitement. He thinks it is a game, but actually he is learning from this game. He learns what we want him to learn. She said that she has never known that before. She has never tried this before. But now because she's participating in the program, she learned how to do that.

Zahra and David provided some examples of this:

> Like, before you can, for example, you can tell the child, "Go bring me some water." And, he usually doesn't accept such commands. Another example, "Go and bring your books." He usually doesn't accept such orders, but now she learned to do it in a different way, "Okay, walk in a specific way, and bring me your books," so he understands it as a game. And he follows and obeys orders. We learned how to do that from the program. We give him orders and educate him indirectly, through games, and he warmly accepts this… like, "Can you walk on your toes and bring your books?"

Using games helped with his English language skills as well:

> Actually he learned a lot from the pictures in the books. He knows the name of things, like books, bed, table, and stairs. Before that, he just uses his hands and point to things because he doesn't know the name of those things. But when we played this game that exists in this book, he started to learn the names of the things surrounding him, such as stairs and book. So he start to call things with their names, instead of referring by his hands.

David added that this method even helps with his emotion regulation, "If he is upset, now she knows ideas about how to play funny and useful games with him." David and Zahra were grateful to learn about this approach that helped with their son's learning in many areas. David said, "We are learning a meaningful and modern technique that offer a great help."

Joyce shared that she learnt *how* to play with her daughter in HIPPY. Before moving to Canada, her daughter typically went to preschool or stayed with her grandparents while Joyce and her husband worked. She said, "So most of time, we will have like two or three hours a day before she go to bed. And we don't know how to play with her." When Joyce and her family came to Canada and the COVID-19 pandemic changed their routine, she said, "We don't know what to do." She was glad that HIPPY was there to guide her. She said, "In HIPPY program, it taught us how to play." Joyce provided an example of how they played together:

> After we read a book and it told us to make two puppets. And she and me can play those, using the book. So let's say she has a book called

Sam and Stella, I remember. And she says, "Mom, can you be Sam? I want to be Stella." Okay. So we played.

Joyce found this to be a valuable aspect of HIPPY. She said, "I know more ways to play with them" and "we always play with her now."

Two mothers, Salma and Mukisa discussed the value of play in connecting with their children. Salma described several positive memories about this. She recalled an activity where they were learning about animals, "I loved it. Because she had to imitate certain animals. So it was so much fun because she makes such a cute face trying to imitate a bat, and I don't know, a raccoon." She also described an activity about body parts, "It is always really fun, right? Because you see them in front of the mirror, making these faces, and trying to find their, you know, their ears." Salma continued, "It is so cute. Like you see how the child comes out of them. That silliness, that maybe you haven't gotten to see in your child because you're always so busy." Salma found these moments to be meaningful because it provided an opportunity for her to see their playful side. Mukisa agreed. She spoke about the benefit that both she and her children were gaining from playing and having fun together, "It's nice to see us laugh and play over some HIPPY activities," she said. Mukisa shared, "We also do a lot of roleplay type of games. And, you know, it's created such an open space to do drama, to pretend we're an airplane." She appreciated that HIPPY provided more opportunity for this, "And I know it's very normal for families to do that. But I think it again, that open space, that permission. Like yeah! Do this, set time aside, and go with it." Mukisa explained that she was prioritizing these positive moments with her children. She shared, "Admittedly, there's going to be a cost. And the cost is, let's say, late nights, or you go off of schedule, or even a messy home. So I just hope that they take away the experiences that we had." Mukisa learnt that play is an important need for children that she was willing to prioritize, during this "very important stage" in their life:

> And so to learn that playing is a need for children, right? Their experience with play is a really strong need for them, right? I don't want to take that away from them, just because we have things to do the next day, or school the next day.

Adding to this, Mukisa saw play as an opportunity for her children to develop leadership skills. She shared that it allows her to "take a step back a little bit, and see my child kind of be a leader." She enjoyed seeing them make their own choices and modify activities to suit their needs. Sometimes they would "change the activity a little bit to their liking." "It's nice to see them take on choices like that," she said. Mukisa also learnt through HIPPY that she can ask her children to take the lead and practice teaching her. She provided an example of this:

> When it comes to the board games, and they're teaching me how to play, then I pretend to not know. So then they go and give me instructions. And then, "No, Mom, that's not how you do it." Right? So just those little moments. It's just letting them feel that role rather than me always, as parents, being always the ones telling them what to do next… Because as a mom, it's very tiring to give the kids instructions for the day, and then the next instruction, and the next, and the next one. And then as much as you want to play with them with their toys, it does feel like how long is this gonna last? And what's my role in this play? They can take the lead and it's very healthy for them to do that.

At the same time, Mukisa enjoyed the opportunity to be playful herself. She said, "It brings the child out in you. Especially if I want to be the one colouring [laughs]." Mukisa summarized, "So it's nice to see them feel that permission, that open space, that confidence. And it was for both of us. They probably tapped into their bigger kid feeling. And I probably tapped into my inner child feelings."

4.3.2. Encouragement

Parents learnt to use more positive feedback while teaching their children in HIPPY. They used words of encouragement and acknowledged their children's strengths while their children were learning. For instance, Olinda said she was no longer giving her children commands such as, "Okay, let's get the Bible," "Let's do this one too," "Do that and do that," or using feedback like, "That's good or not." Instead, she was becoming intentional with her language. She said, "I think it helps me a lot as a parent" to learn how to "talk" and "teach them in the right example." She was trying to encourage her children by saying things like, "Good job," "Maybe next time you can improve," "We can do it again if you want," or, "It's all practice and just having fun." She now believed, "It's

what you say after your kids do these activities," that is important. Kate had also changed her approach to handling her children's mistakes. She explained that she helps them when they get stuck and encourages them to try again:

> These days, I just, "Okay, let me try first." That's the thing, I told them first, if they may have made some mistake, if they hesitate, really, if they hesitate to count, I always lead them, "Okay, let me do it first." And then I can be a good example. I can show how to read it, how to count, and how to do something. And then, "Try again, try again."

She added, "They always worry about, 'What if I'm wrong? What if I did it not good?' So I told them, 'Good or bad is not important. Trying is important.'" Kate mentioned using both encouragement and patience, "Rather than just, 'Okay done,' just scolding and blaming them. Whether they did that, I always wait for them and encourage them, 'You can do better next time, I can wait for you.'" This was a "big difference" in her approach. Chiku was next to share that she was practicing a more encouraging approach in teaching her daughter. She now acknowledges what has been done correctly, rather than acknowledging what has been done incorrectly. For instance, she used to say, "No, no, no, you have to do like this," when her daughter made a mistake. Chiku shared what she had learned:

> In HIPPY they say that you should never say no to your child. If they draw something, if she draws a flower, if it is not a flower, I say, "No no no, this is not a flower, a flower should be like this, this way." Now I say, "Oh, wow. You have drawn a flower. Let me also try, let me also correct it." Like I started doing that. There are three seasons in HIPPY. From uncomplete, complete, and correct. Yeah, so if they say the answer correct, you have to confirm, "Yeah, it's correct." But if they say half answer correct, you have to complete that answer. Then if they say everything wrong, you don't have to say no. Just correct it. So that they don't feel discouraged.

Chiku provided another example where her daughter might say, "One, two, three, five," while practicing her counting. In response to this, Chiku will provide praise and a gentle correction rather than pointing out the mistake. For example, "Wow, you know, counting! One, two, three, *four*." This was working well for her daughter as she realized that helped her daughter to stay motivated and keep trying. She shared:

> If I said no, she used to get sad. She starts crying, "Okay. I don't know how to do this." Oh no, she's discouraged. And then I started saying, "No it's good, you have to do it like this" and then she's like, "Oh!" and keep going, keep working. More creativity will come out, writing, everything changed.

Mukisa touched on this as well. She said, "If there was something that they weren't really strong at," HIPPY "helped my dialogue," allowing her to "have a positive interaction with them." She realized that teaching "doesn't have to be something about disciplining or something about, this is what you have to do." Instead, HIPPY "guides the parents to talk the child through an activity," in a positive and non-authoritarian way, which she was incorporating in her parenting approach outside of HIPPY too. Aden had a similar experience. She explained, "Because before actually, we blame our kids whenever they made mistakes. But here, I learned always we should praise them." She shared, "But actually, it's not easy to practice. Sometimes I also scold and blame them," but "most of the time I take the chance to say, 'Oh, good job. You're a good boy.'"

4.3.3. Patience

Participants became increasingly patient and gentle with their children as they began to understand and accept their child's learning process. At times, this involved attending to their own inner challenges. Parents told stories of encountering challenges during HIPPY and how they learnt to slow down, adjust their expectations, and respond to the situation calmly, in a way that supported both themselves and their child. Laura for example shared a story about teaching her son how to use scissors. She explained that both she and him were "feeling frustrated." She found this to be a challenging skill to teach and would end up using the scissors for him when he could not use them correctly. Laura asked her home visitor for suggestions and was surprised to learn that her son's struggle was perfectly normal. She said:

> I asked for the home visitor to explain to me, to give me ideas. And she explain to me, it's okay, it's time. He needs time, because he's not going to do the best way in the first time. It's a process, it's a process. And it's good to share the challenge, and at the same time, the progress! Yes. Yes. It's good.

Not only did her home visitor normalize this experience, but she reframed it as a potentially bonding experience. This provided Laura with a more positive outlook on her and her son's challenge. She also had a new understanding of how children learn, and adapted her expectations around this:

> Yes, because the adult likes everything very fast, the progress very fast. But for child, it is necessary to take time. To be very patient. Very patient and repeat every time, or a lot of times, the same story. Because for me, I take one book. Okay, I read, I want another one. Yes. But for child it is like repeat, repeat, repeat.

Laura explained that when she reads a book, "I don't want to read" it again "because I understand." She continued, "But for children it is necessary to read again, and again, and again." She noticed the "same" process was required for her son's motor skill development. She realized that repeating the same exercises helps her son "to have control for his own body." Another mother who learnt about the value of patience when teaching her children was Kate. She spoke about how she used to feel when her children did not understand her, "If they don't know if I tell one time, I was so mad, 'Why you don't understand me?'" She empathized, "But yeah, they are children! When I was younger, I was the same like them… So I have more patience when I be with him now." Kate spoke about how she has changed her approach. She provided an example of how she used to respond compared to how she currently responds when her children are reading:

> And sometimes they do a lot of mistakes because they don't have any concept of a long vowel or a short vowel. But at the time, at first, "I told you yesterday!" But now, I have changed. Like, "Okay, let's try again. Okay, let mother read it first and then you can follow up." Something like that. So I do not scream, I don't yell. I understand because they are learning.

Kate explained that in her home country, "You need to hurry, you need to be good," whereas "Canada is very different." Kate said, "Here, I can wait for you. Yeah, that's a big thing. So now I always wait for them." She said that she will try the activity first and then let them follow, and it is okay if they do not understand right away. Kate

summarized, "I've learned myself how to tell them, how to teach them gently, with patience." Chiku also became more accepting and patient with her daughter's learning process. She mentioned frequent repetition as a helpful teaching strategy. She learnt, "It's okay if they don't know how to do it" at first, "but if you tell them more than once or twice, at least it will register in their mind and subconsciously they will try to see it. If you keep on repeating." Olinda said her teaching approach now involves "understanding and patience" as well. When asked for an example of this, Olinda reported that she used to give up quickly when an activity with her children did not go as planned. Now, she adapts and tries again. She said:

> For example, going treasure hunting, when sometimes we can't find it, instead of giving up, we have to be, "Okay, let's try different things, okay, instead of hunting the different kinds of leaves, let's turn to the different houses." "How many same houses there? And how many blue houses there? How many tall house there are? How many brown houses there?" You know, instead of giving up, just try new things to try looking for.

Aden was another parent who had become more patient with her child through taking breaks, which she learnt in HIPPY. She said, "Now I feel I know how to handle kids, how to calm them, how to make me calm. Because sometimes I feel very stressed. But they taught us and they guide us." For example:

> If I get stressed or angry, I don't like to talk. But my son doesn't like to leave me, he wants to talk. He wants to talk to me. Then I will take them out, I give them play, or make them busy, then I will feel I just want to be alone. And that made me very happy. Very, very calm.

She said lets her son play independently when she is stressed, rather than playing with him because, "sometimes if I get stressed or tired, it makes it very hard. It changes the situation very hard. Very bad. So I should be very stable, then I can manage everything well." She concluded, "That's making me happy, making me calm," and believed, "HIPPY improved me" as a parent in this way. Joyce reported becoming "more patient" since participating in the program, which she also attributed to taking breaks from playing with her son when needed. She realized, "I have to relax by myself" so I do not feel "crazy [laughs]." Last, Salma described a shift towards a more gentle approach. She said, "I

think it has made me even softer in certain aspects when I sit with them, and sharing with them, and understanding how they learn." She shared that she had experience teaching, but not with preschool-aged children. Teaching her own children allowed her to see their unique learning processes:

> Because as I said, my field of expertise is not preschool. I have worked with small children though. And so although I have that advantage, it's not the same, it's never the same. Even if I was a preschool teacher, it's never the same when you work with your own children. So seeing that process and everything, I think it has made me for sure, I don't know, just softer. Just being more sensitive to certain things, to their learning process.

4.3.4. Attunement

Parents were developing attunement to their children's energy levels, meaning they were carefully recognizing and responding to their children's moment-to-moment needs. This showed up in how they enforced HIPPY participation. For example, Elida began to notice when her daughter was ready to learn. She realized that her daughter had less energy on weekdays, "Sometime she say, 'I'm bored. I don't want to learn. I don't want HIPPY.' But it's because she is at the school, then she came home. So I decided to do the activities on the weekends." Elida explained, "During the week, I don't push her to do it." She wanted to maintain her daughter's excitement for learning, and decided to save the activities that require more focus on the weekends. This worked best for her daughter. She shared, "We need some space, be fresh, and capable to do it, and you are not tired. So we do that on Saturdays and Sundays, and that is good." Mukisa adopted this attuned approach as well, but noted that it was a challenge for her at first. She shared, "I think another challenge would be hearing or listening, having that listening ear of when they're not really into an activity." She said, "It was hard for me to figure out, when do my kids have energy to do HIPPY homework… It took me a long time to figure it out." Now when her children are not receptive to a lesson, she responds to their needs by saying, "Okay, we won't do it today. We'll try again tomorrow." Aden was adopting the same mindset, "HIPPY introduced me, we should teach our kids whenever they are comfortable to learn." She explained:

> I can't ask him, "Come and study now." It's not that proper. We should check he is mentally prepared to learn now. Then we can start to

learn. And also it's not for long. It's to be very short. Whenever he feels happy and comfortable, then we can. Now I do that. Whenever he study, or eat, whatever he does, I did not force anything… I offer, then he can decide. Those are the things I learned here.

Aden described how she has changed in her beliefs:

Actually at home, we take a bit of food, we have something, we want to feed all of them to him. That's our target. We should feed all of them to him. Because it's for them, it's very good for his health, so we thought he should eat all that. But now here I learned, it's not only for the food, for all. We can't force them. We can give, they can accept whatever they want.

Aden was using this approach with her other child, who is not in HIPPY, "I am also like this to my daughter too," she shared.

4.3.5. Acceptance

As parents discovered their children's learning needs and preferences, they were accepting of this and willing to adapt their approach. Chiku shared a story about understanding her daughter's learning style. Prior to starting HIPPY, she wondered if something may have been wrong with her daughter, since she was not learning as quickly as her son had at her age. She explained:

I used to think, "Oh, is this a problem with her, that she cannot understand what I'm saying, what I'm teaching her? Why she's not adapting? Why she's not learning?" So that was my moral concern. Because as I said, when I used to teach my son, he used to understand and he used to write. But my daughter was not like that. So why does she have any problem? Should I show to a doctor? Because in the beginning I used to think like that. But I learned a different HIPPY way to teach them.

Through HIPPY, Chiku learnt more about her daughter and found new ways of teaching that worked well for her. She shared, "I started to understand her. There are different ways of teaching. So only my method of teaching was right for me, but not right for the kid." Chiku shifted from thinking that something may be wrong, to seeing her daughter as

having unique needs. She said, "I have to understand that each child has his own way of learning," and shared her willingness to modify her teaching approach:

> I adapted the teaching in her way now. So she's adapting. Because it is difficult for her to adapt because she's small, she cannot understand. But for me, I can understand. So I start to understand it. So through her I am also learning something different.

Another mother who adopted this perspective was Aden. She said, "Before actually, I compare my kids with others, but after starting the HIPPY, I did not do that. I think my son is very unique and very special. And he can do whatever he can, whatever he knows." Aden accepted her children's differences and was willing to adapt her teaching approaches. She discovered, "I should handle them in a different manner. It's not the same." For instance, "I should tell them different stories, different way."

4.4. HIPPY provides an enjoyable curriculum

A third way in which HIPPY supported parent-child closeness was through an engaging curriculum that both parents and children enjoyed. This created a space for positive shared experiences. Children's enthusiasm for HIPPY activities was encouraging and reinforcing to parents, and parents' subsequent enjoyment was likely encouraging to children, setting up positive interactions between them. This motivated both children, parents, and even other family members to continue participating. This theme contains three subthemes: 1) Children enjoy participating, 2) Parents enjoy participating, and 3) Families enjoy participating.

4.4.1. Children enjoy participating

Parents reported that HIPPY quickly caught and held their children's attention. They shared quotes illustrating their children's excitement and engagement during the activities. Olinda said for example, "The main thing is it's fun to learn" with HIPPY. Her daughter often asks, "What can we do today? What is my homework?" She explained, "She calls it homework even though she's my little one," and, "My daughter is very interested." Olinda quoted her son as well, "He's just starting this year but he loves it. He

said, 'Oh, my homework, today is my homework!'" Joyce had a similar experience. She said her daughter will ask, "Oh mom, do we have activities today?" and added that during HIPPY, her children "both play very well and are happy. They very enjoy it." Her daughter liked the books in particular. She shared:

> She likes a book called Elephant and Piggy. It's also a book from HIPPY program. My home visitors sent me this book. And she loves this book! She asked me to read all the books, all the series from the library…. And for Elephant and Piggy, she goes, "Mom, can you be Elephant? I want to be Piggy."

Chicku's daughter asked the same questions, "She enjoys it. She'll be like, 'Okay, what are we going to do this week?'" and "Mommy, can we do HIPPY?'" Chiku shared that when they started HIPPY, her daughter "wanted to learn everything in one day… She was wanting everything together because she was so interested. After their first program year together, Chiku was under the impression that her daughter would age out of HIPPY at age five. She described her daughter's initial disappointment about this, and excitement upon learning they could continue:

> I thought HIPPY was only for three years and four years. So I said, "HIPPY is not for five years. I'm so sorry, you won't be in HIPPY." She was very sad. "No, I want HIPPY, I want HIPPY." Then I got to know even for five years there is a HIPPY program. And now she's very happy. She's like, "Yay, I've got HIPPY now!"

When Chiku was asked about any challenges she has encountered while participating in HIPPY she responded, "Challenges? Um, no she was very sad because it was only once a week [laughs]." Mukisa reported several times throughout the interview that her children "enjoy" HIPPY. She said they often look back on the memories of HIPPY activities with fondness, and her daughter "treasures some of the crafts that she's made." Further, Mukisa reported that her children respond particularly well to HIPPY activities compared to other educational activities. She said, "For some reason, they'll listen to it. They'll listen to my instructions with HIPPY homework. I can't do the same with other workbooks. So maybe it's just the gentle approach to it." She also thought that her children enjoy seeing her and her husband making an effort to do something meaningful with them:

I think the kids get a kick out of seeing us kind of like, doing an instruction and being like a teacher. And I think they enjoy that. I think they enjoy seeing mom or dad trying their best to teach them like this math activity, or, you know, be the art teacher for the moment.

Laura also repeatedly stated throughout the interview that her son enjoyed participating in HIPPY. "Every activity he enjoys," she said, though he immediately responded well to the HIPPY books. She said, "The first thing that he likes, my boy likes, is to read books." Nowadays, he enjoys the "activities for exercise," that involve "moving." "He enjoys a lot," she concluded. Salma said that her children "really like the program, especially" one of her daughters, "She loves it. She just loves the activities." She shared a unique perspective about one of her daughters:

She felt like a special type of child because she had work at school, and then she would go home and she had extra activities, which she knew that the rest of her classmates didn't have. So that was really, really nice.

Salma felt that participating in HIPPY should be an easy choice for families because, "The happier your children will be," she said. Elida believed this too. She echoed, "HIPPY program helps in the happiness of the child's life… It's helping because they are enjoying." She provided examples of HIPPY activities that had enriched her daughter's life. One was growing tomatoes in the backyard, which Elida said "was amazing for Sara." She described the process, "She put the seed like that, and then we put water every day, every day. And then when she started to see the tree, 'Oh my god, mom! Look mom! Come! Look! This is a tree!'" She quoted her daughter's excitement throughout the process, "'Oh my god we are going to have tomatoes Mom!' And then when the tomato tree starts to grow, grow, grow, and give tomato, tomato, tomato, 'Mom, the tomato's ready! Mom, the tomato's red! Look, look!'" Elida also spoke about a HIPPY science experiment involving ice, salt, and a jar. She described both her and her daughter's excitement when the experiment was complete, "I didn't know! And when I say, 'Oh my god, Sara look! That is a miracle. The ice stick on the jar! Wow.' And Sara, 'Oh mom, I want to do it again!'" Elida had several stories of positive shared experiences like this, which supported positive interactions between the two of them. Another was a

HIPPY baking activity. Elida wanted her daughter to be familiar with her culture, so she translated and modified some of the HIPPY activities. For example, "I changed cupcakes for traditional dishes that we have in [my home country] that is called arepa." She was happy to share that her daughter was excited about helping with this on a regular basis:

> So now, when I'm making arepa on Saturday, on Sunday, she's like, "Mom, I want to help you! I want to help you! Okay? So we are going to make circles, right?" "Yes, Sara, we are going to make circles."

One participant, Chiku, believed that HIPPY sparked her children's love for learning. She spoke about this change in depth, with a focus on her daughter. She said before the program, "She was just only watching TV, so me and my husband were worried. Why does she only want to watch only TV every time?" Chiku compared this to now, where "every time she wants to do something different. She asks her father, 'Can I do this?' 'Can I do this?' 'Can you buy me that so that I can learn in a different way of painting, colouring?'" Her daughter loved learning with HIPPY so much that she sought out similar activities. She continued:

> So now she started showing interest in colouring, drawing, and then the alphabet. She writes and then she draws something. So my husband also is happy. Not only watching TV, they are doing some other activities now. She is interested in science she's showing. Then they learned animals. So she started showing interest in animals, dinosaurs. She knows so many dinosaur names, I don't know that [laughs].

Her daughter "started loving science" as well. She said, "Now she's saying, 'Mommy, this is solid, this is liquid.' I'm like, 'How did you learn?' So because of this, she was doing experiments. On YouTube she searches for science experiments." Chiku's son did this with her as well, "There's some website, I don't know what it is, they learn why hair is black, how does it turn gray, why do you blink, how do you become old, why your face when you become old wrinkles, and all that." She added, "Now they're watching something but they are watching something they can learn from." This love of learning came as a surprise to Chiku. She said, "I'm like, I've never taught her all this. I never asked them to do all this, but they are doing it on their own. Even my son, my daughter, both of them. They started doing on their own."

4.4.2. Parents enjoy participating

Parents frequently and candidly shared their own enjoyment and positive appraisal of the program. They valued the opportunity to teach their children, appreciated that HIPPY kept their families busy and entertained at home, and even enjoyed engaging with the material themselves. Several participants were recommending HIPPY or sharing the teachings of HIPPY with other mothers, further illustrating their belief in the program. To start, Salma shared, "It's truly been an enjoyable journey," and "the beautiful part is all the enjoyment I get out of it." She appreciated that there were fun activities to do at home, especially "around this time when the temperature drops and nobody wants to go out." She also found it rewarding to teach her children, something she had often thought about doing prior to HIPPY. She said:

> I always wanted to teach them. Although I am not a preschool teacher, I'm an ESL teacher. My whole thing has always been, I want to teach them. If I have the tools, if I have all the knowledge already in my head, why not apply some of it to my own children, right? With my own family.

She added, "I feel like I have connected my career with my children" now. Because of the benefits she experienced with her own family, she believed in the benefits of HIPPY for entire communities:

> HIPPY helps not only us as parents, it helps not only the government because it avoids future problems, HIPPY helps teachers in school. I see teachers struggling in public school because children are not stimulated the way they were supposed to be. And so then it helps the teacher, it helps the principal, it helps everybody.

Mukisa also valued being a part of her children's lives in this way. She said, "It's really nice to do those activities with them," and added, "I get to see in person how they learn and what they're learning. And I appreciate that very much." She found that this helped her to "get back to some calm and some peace" because it allows her to be "present." She added, "Otherwise it's just watching videos, play with toys, clean up, watch videos,

eat, play with toys, clean up." The guidance of HIPPY allowed her to achieve one of her parenting goals, similar to Salma. She shared:

> I think it kind of makes my homeschooling dreams come true on the side. Or like my wanting to teach the kids and experience something with them. Because again, otherwise, it would just be unintentional activities. I'll have to make something up every day.

She summarized her experience as "nothing short of positive" and added, "I definitely refer people, other moms to it." Elida agreed that "HIPPY has amazing ideas" for activities, which made her life easier and more fun. Without HIPPY, she imagined she would be "running out of ideas." She said, "Maybe we are going to do the same and the same every day. Like, don't have any new ideas, any new experiments for the week," which would be "boring." She enthusiastically shared her enjoyment for learning alongside her daughter in HIPPY:

> When I found HIPPY, I like it. I like it because that is a program, you have one week for doing something with your kid that you are going to enjoy as well. And you are going to learn as well. And then you are going to say, "Oh my god! I didn't know about it. Wow! That's amazing!" It's like, you are teaching your kid. But you are also teaching yourself.

Throughout the interview she shared her positive feelings about the program, "I love this program. I really love it. Love it. Love it," "I want this program to continue. Because it's amazing," and "I'm so happy with HIPPY." Elida especially cherished the activities based around HIPPY books. She said, "The books that they gave to me, every one has a message. Every one has a purpose." She also appreciated learning about Indigenous languages and cultures through some of the HIPPY books. She said, "Another thing that I like is they are teaching us about First Nations, Metis, of our Indigenous people as well. So that I love as well… These books were amazing." Kate mirrored previous perspectives, "It was a wonderful journey," plus, "The good thing is the HIPPY program, it is just not like teaching your children, 'Okay the ABC, how to write ABC.' But it's an easy and fun way to approach the new language." She added that without HIPPY, "I'd feel very bored at home." Olinda felt the same way, reporting she had a "good experience" participating with her family. She said, "We are really enjoying it" and, "I

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think it's a very good, very nice program for the family." She described the joy of learning and exploring alongside her children, while describing one of the HIPPY activities:

> I never made the playdough. We usually buy with playdough, right? But in the HIPPY program, instead of you buying the playdough, you can make your own playdough. But in my life, I never. Because raised from different country, you never played with the playdough, it's different kind of. And then in the program we have to make our own playdough and things. But you can make it coloured right? Using the food color. I'm making myself the playdough with my daughter together! First time! [laughs] Myself and my daughter. So it's an interesting thing to learn myself and with my kids together.

Like Elida and Kate, Olinda believed that without HIPPY, they would be doing the "same thing" at home, rather than trying "new things." She provided the metaphor that this would be "like eating the same pizza every day or something [laughs]." The books from HIPPY stood out to Olinda in particular. She said, "They always have very interesting books," which she valued because her family "likes to read a lot." She explained, "All the books are connected to the weekly activities and that's very interesting to read the book and do the activities, and pretending, and playing." Aden also expressed her appreciation for the books:

> HIPPY send us the storybooks. In every session, we have storybooks. Those stories are very great that they selected. I don't know how they selected, but every story is very, very helpful to us. So most of the books, most of the time, I learned from that.

Aden reported learning "a lot of messages" from these stories. She said, "Yes, it's educated our kids, but I learned a lot of messages from that. The books are very great," and "they are very very useful to us." Aden was also sharing HIPPY parenting approaches with her friends in her home country. She said, "Because my ladies are not here. They don't know because in our country we have another way of handling our kids. So I give them small tips." She told her friends back home about the messages in the HIPPY storybooks as well, "I share the stories with my ladies too. Because they are very, very knowledgeable stories, very meaningful stories." Laura shared her appreciation for HIPPY as well, "I really like it. I really enjoy the activities. I'm learning a lot of things." She added, "I really really like it. Because in [my home country], we don't

have these kind of activities. Don't have these kind of opportunities for the mother."
Joyce agreed that it was "a very nice program." David, translating for his wife Zahra
reported, "She finds the program very useful and she enjoys participating in the program.
And that's why she decided to renew the participation for another year." Further, "She
advises her friends to participate in the program."

Two participants had such a positive experience that they began working for their
HIPPY site. The first was Chiku, who became a HIPPY home visitor herself, as she was
inspired to help others in her community. In her words, "I was like, 'Wow. So I'm having a
good experience. I want to give this experience to some other moms. And to make them
also happy.'" She also thought, "Now I understood how the teachers were here. So I
want to help other teachers. So HIPPY home visitor is a good way. To teach the three or
four year kids to make them ready for the kindergarten." Chiku accomplished this goal.
She described her experience as a home visitor:

> So now I share my own experience with them. When I'm taking the
> class, I share my own experience, "Okay, you can do counting like
> this. I did with my daughter." They will be, "Oh thank you for that."
> Makes me happy.

She continued:

> They also share their own experience with the kids. And when you see
> other kids doing the counting, learning, you also feel happy. Someone
> has benefited. Even if the mom was finding it difficult. Now they are
> also benefiting from it. So that's a very great initiative.

Similarly, Salma was volunteering to help mothers with limited English proficiency
access HIPPY. She described her work:

> I help a Mexican mom whose English is very limited. And so she wants
> to be able to teach, to do all the activities with her three year old. So
> every week, I sit with her and I go through the whole curriculum of the
> program. I read it in English, I translate some certain things to
> Spanish, otherwise she will not understand, so she gets the idea of the
> activity.

Salma explained that her desire to do this rewarding work was "awakened" by HIPPY. She said, "It has increased my desire to work with immigrants, and to do more community work."

4.4.3. Families enjoy participating

Positive shared experiences inspired by HIPPY often went beyond the mother-child dyad. Parents shared examples of enjoyable family interaction while participating in HIPPY, signifying that the program may have not only brought the participating parent and child closer, but it may have increased closeness among other family members as well. They were happy to report that many HIPPY activities were appropriate for other ages and could be enjoyed by their whole household, which worked well for many families.

Those with more than one child reported that both older and younger siblings were interested and learning from the activities. Chiku said, for example, "Some of the games, it's not like only you can play. Even the whole family can play with them… everyone can do it. Everyone can have fun." Chiku said her eight-year-old son "was involved in all the games." She added, "Sometimes he helped my daughter to read. He will tell the story. The new books come. He will say, "Mommy can I read?" and Chiku is happy to let him as he is developing his reading skills as well. "So it was good for him also," she said. Olinda noticed the same thing. She echoed, "Some activities it's not just only for the kids. There is a game for the family" and "it's fun." Like Chiku, her older son was often interested. She said, "My older son, now he's seven, he usually participates." He will say, "I want to do it together." She provided examples of group HIPPY activities like "I Spy," "Hide-and-Seek," and "treasure hunts." Joyce included her two-year-old son in HIPPY activities as well. She said, "I remember once we use flour to make playdough. And I also let my son to join us. So they both play very well and are happy. They very enjoy it." She added, "She can read books to her brother as well. But just the very simple ones." She reported that her daughter even mirrors the HIPPY teaching approaches with him:

> In HIPPY program, it is focused on lots of pictures. It was like, "Oh, can you find a shovel? Can you find a dog? Can you find something?"

And she will play with her brother, say, "Oh, brother, can you find a dog?" And her brother will point at the dog.

Laura shared something similar. She said that her two-year-old son likes to observe his older brother doing HIPPY activities and that this works well for their family. She shared, "For me, it's impossible to say, 'Okay go to the other room, and I stay with Nicolas.' No, it's impossible. I permit him to stay close to the brother to see the activities." She said he "likes the books" and "listens to the stories." She added that he even "tries to count now" on his own, and though he makes mistakes, he is "trying, and that is a good thing [laughs]." However, she said, "He don't participate every time because some activities are not for him." For more advanced activities, Laura explained, "I put him to take a nap, and I participate just with Nicolas because I try to spend the time with him." However, "Some activities, like to go outside, to count the animals, to count the rocks. It's good, these kind of activities to involve the whole family." For Mukisa, both of her children were in separate HIPPY program years, but she intentionally included both them in their activities:

> My hack has been to do HIPPY homework, even though it was Marco's age, I'll have both of them there. And even though it was Daniela's age, I'll have both of them there. If they were interested. And for the most part they were actually. It was nice to see that pressure off of each of them. That they're learning together.

One participant, Salma, shared that her children's grandmother was participating. She said, "My mom is here, she's visiting. So even my mom sits and does activities with them."

Participants also touched on their partners' involvement in HIPPY, who were involved to varying extents. Some mothers intentionally involved their partners' in HIPPY so they could see what their child was learning, and others asked for their partners' help when they were unavailable. This created additional father-child interactions that may not have occurred otherwise. For example, Mukisa shared that her husband helps when he can, "Whenever I ask for help to get one done, he'll definitely help. I think if our schedule allowed, I know that he'd be doing more." She added that HIPPY is particularly fun "if dad has a chance to join in," and likes that "he gets to see where the kids are at."

Kate shared that she asks her husband to help when she is unavailable, "Whenever I'm busy with some house chores, I ask my husband to read a book before the activities." She said that this was "a big change" because now, "they know, not only mother, but also that he can read a book for them." Salma explained that her husband will "participate here and there." For example:

> Sometimes if I would have to go somewhere I would just tell him, "Oh I didn't get to finish this activity and tomorrow I have to meet my home visitor, so can you just finish it up with her?" And he will do it.

Laura shared that she makes an effort to include her husband in HIPPY. For instance, when he gets home from work she will say to her son, "Okay, show the activity that you did today for your father." She continued, "And he say for the father, 'Today, I did this one!' And I say, 'Explain more, explain more.' That is the way that I tried to introduce my husband." Olinda did not elaborate on her husband's engagement in HIPPY, but mentioned that he liked the program, "We are really enjoying it. My husband is even too," she said. Only one participant, Joyce, mentioned that their husband was not involved in HIPPY, "My husband don't like to join. Most of time when we did this, he had other things to do."

4.5. HIPPY supports newcomer parents

The fourth pathway supporting parent-child closeness was through looking after the needs of parents, which reduced their stress and increased their confidence as parents. Participants described HIPPY as helpful and supportive to them as newcomers with young children, while navigating parenthood during a global pandemic. This support reduced the impact of several stressors they were facing, which allowed them to be more present and available as parents. Each participant described specific elements of the program that made their lives easier, described in the following two subthemes: 1) Immigration support and 2) Parenting support.

4.5.1. Immigration support

Participants reported that HIPPY helped them adapt to life in Canada and reduce immigration-related stressors such as langauge differences, cultural differences, and social isolation. Through the program they improved their English, learnt about Canadian culture and education, and felt socially supported by their home visitors. This subtheme has two additional subthemes: 1) Support with language and culture and 2) Social support.

Support with language and culture

As parents improved their English and learnt about Canadian culture through HIPPY, they gained more insight into their child's experiences at school and felt an improved ability to communicate with their child. Participants also found it helpful that home visitors were willing to answer specific questions related to living in their new city. Joyce, for example, reported that learning English was one of the main reasons she joined the program, and her home visitor helped her to accomplish this. She said, "She taught me a lot… She told me all the English words. And she was reading the books for me." She expressed, "I want to practice my English as well" because "it's very good for me and my daughter." Elida felt the same way. She noticed a language barrier developing between her and her daughter because her daughter was learning English more quickly. She explained, "We are in a province that the first language is English. And so it's hard for me to break the barrier of language with my daughter." She added, "The Canadian people use a lot of phrases and verbs, a lot of things, there are a lot of words that even I don't know." Because of this, she was grateful that the program was in English, "It's amazing to have the material in English, right? Because it forces you to learn about the language as well. And also to read everything in English, to improve yourself for helping your daughter. So that is amazing."

Kate joined HIPPY to help teach her children English, but also found it helpful to learn about Canadian culture along the way. She said, "Looking back, it was really great help for life in Canada." Kate shared, "Here in Canada and back in [my home country], the way to approach the children regarding education is very different" and "this environment is very new to my family. But during the HIPPY program, I know I can learn

how to build my relationship with my children in a new environment." She added, "They also explained some Canadian culture… Because as I told you, the parenting ways is very different here than in my country. So I can learn about the different parenting ways in Canada." Kate's home visitor also provided helpful information for getting settled into their city. She shared:

> She always gave me advice. Like, where I can buy the good fruits or good groceries, and also where you can apply for the subsidy. So not only the education route, but also she helped me with lots of financial information.

Like Kate, Olinda found HIPPY helpful for learning about Canadian culture. She said, "It helps you a lot for the learning from the new country" because "raising kids is different" in "a different country." Aden noticed this too. She shared, "I know my country, I grow up there, so I know how to handle my kid in [my country], but not in Canada. So HIPPY is a very good opportunity."

Chiku found it useful to learn about the Canadian education system through HIPPY. She expressed her confusion when their family first moved to Canada and her son spoke about playing and learning outside at school. She used to ask her son, "Where is your book? What did they teach you?" and he would say, "Mommy they taught us about rain, we learned about the clouds." She initially thought, "Wow, this is a different way of teaching." However, she learnt through HIPPY that this is a common approach to learning in Canada. She knows now that, "Here they teach in a different way." She imagined, "Like me, there'll be so many other parents who will be finding it difficult to teach their child different ways," and believed HIPPY helps with this. Aden had a similar experience. She shared, "I don't know the Canadian education system. That's the main reason I joined with HIPPY program." She said since participating, "I can understand the Canadian education system, schooling system, and schooling regulations, and the communication we have with his teacher or school department. And I can understand what they are going to learn, and how it will be." She discussed the differences in education between Canada and her home country:

> Because in our country, actually, the schooling system, it's writing, learning, writing, learning for medical, numerical, mathematical, like

that, education based. But here it is not like that. The kids learn a lot of different kinds of knowledge. They are practical. And their communication, they develop their communication.

On top of this, Aden's home visitor helped her in finding a house to buy:

When we buy a house, I was very confused. The location, and the house. And at the time they advise us about the [city] because we don't know much about it. And they introduce it. They gave us useful comments to know the city and the city life. Then I came to a conclusion. Here we can buy a house that we wanted.

She reported, "We joined in HIPPY for the educational purpose for my son. But it's very useful to our family too," and concluded, "Without them, I don't know how it would be in Canada."

Social support

Parents were grateful to have regular contact with friendly and supportive home visitors, who were willing to answer questions above and beyond their role, and in one case provide friendship. This was particularly needed for some during a time of transition and social isolation. Kate noted her home visitor as a significant source of support. She shared, "I really appreciate the HIPPY coordinator and my home visitor. They're very patient whenever I have some inquiries or I have some concerns," which was meaningful when she felt isolated:

It really helps because especially we have no one here, no friends, no relatives at the time. So this is the only way, this is the only open door, that I can communicate with the HIPPY home visitor, and I can have lots of coaching from home visitor. Like how I can build a relationship and what's the steps to approach the HIPPY program.

She found her home visitor's advice particularly relevant due to their shared life experiences. She said, "She has experiences with two children. And she also has a background of being non Canadian." Kate considered her home visitor a "friend." She described their relationship, "She always calls me at least once a week so I can tell what I am concerned about and I can tell what I feel. So she was a good listener. So yeah,

she really helped me." Aden shared, "If we need additional support, they provide it to us." She explained, "I will contact with my home visitor, and she then contact her coordinator or supervisor. And then she gave us the clear idea, clear advice, and guidance for us to solve whatever issues we have." Aden went to her home visitor for advice about many different topics. She said:

> Apart from the education system, they guide and support in all the ways for the settlement in [our province], whatever issues or problems we have with Sam in school, or in his personal behavior, regulations, and our family situation, and myself, stress, or whatever.

At a group meeting, Aden's home visitor encouraged her to practice self-care to help her feel better. She shared:

> Actually one day I said at the group meeting, I feel a headache. So they said I should take small break, or should go out, take a breath. Little little tools they gave me to calm myself and make me peace.

Zahra's husband David also discussed their supportive relationship with their home visitor, "When [my wife] has any questions, she asks the visitor. Yeah, and the visitor usually clarifies everything to her and makes sure she understands her explanation." He added, "Their support is enough to answer all the questions and everything she needs." Joyce and Salma mentioned the kindness of their home visitors but did not go into detail about them. Joyce said, "I have a very good home visitor last year," and this year, "my home visitor is a very nice person." Salma said, "I have gotten the opportunity to work with an amazing home visitor, and also the coordinator. She's an angel."

4.5.2. Parenting support

Participants spoke at length about several ways in which HIPPY supported their needs as parents. Overall, the program did not seem to create an added sense of stress or responsibility for parents, rather, it reduced their stress around preparing their child for school and keeping their child busy at home. This subtheme contains four additional subthemes: 1) Program accessibility, 2) Support during the pandemic, 3) Support with child development, 4) Parenting guidance.

Program accessibility

Parents noted the accessibility of participating in HIPPY. They were grateful that the program and all necessary materials were provided for free, it was easy to follow, and there was flexibility around scheduling and expectations. These factors saved parents' money, time, and energy, allowing them to enjoy the process of teaching their children. This reduced their stress around coming up with educational activities on their own, while allowing them to feel involved and in control of their child's education.

Kate shared, "The books and materials is complimentary. So for the newcomers like me, with not enough financial ways, they do really great help for our family. So I really appreciate it." She added that the program "doesn't require a lot of money and doesn't require a lot of space." Joyce appreciated access to the HIPPY books as well. She said, "Before this program, we always borrow books from library and after we read this book, we would never read it again. I would send it to library. But now after reading this book, she will read this again." Chiku reported that one of the reasons she was initially interested in HIPPY was because it was financially accessible, "It's free of cost, so that attracted me." Elida felt similarly:

> I like that HIPPY, well, you know, my salary, well, we are two of us. And [this province] is an expensive province. So sometimes I can buy some tools, I can buy paper, etcetera, etcetera. But the other thing is with HIPPY, they provide me the elements to do the activities. So that is amazing as well.

She discussed the endless multitasking involved in parenting, and how HIPPY eases this stress:

> Because I'm working right? So when you are working you don't have a lot of time when you're not working, and imagination to think, "Okay, what activity I'm going to do with Sara today?" Sometimes I don't have time for me. So how can I look for activities, what I need to do, and also follow her progress? I will not be able to do it. So HIPPY makes my life easy.

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Laura expressed the same sentiment, "I really appreciate all activities, the books, and the supplies that I receive." She added, "Because you find a lot of activities on the internet… But you need to prepare. You need to buy the materials. It is more things." She felt, "It is more easy to have the curriculum, have materials, have the activities." Olinda mirrored the previous perspectives, "The thing is, the program is providing all the supplies, right? What you need, what your activities need." She said, "You don't have to go out and look for" things like "glue" or "paper" because "it's already provided." She imagined what teaching her children would look like without HIPPY and said, "I might have to spend money out there looking for a curriculum that I could do with them. And maybe learning how to run a curriculum." Salma shared that she always wanted to teach her children, but did not have the time and resources to organize activities prior to participating in HIPPY. She said:

> You're struggling, trying to find the materials, and thinking of how to put the activities together. Because, like, for me as a teacher, I know how much time it takes to plan everything. And it does take a lot of thinking, and a lot of time, finding something right for the person, for the age… Here everything is being given to you.

Salma's husband joined the interview during this part of the discussion. He added:

> I was just thinking in a way, it actually saves the parents time to develop, and go out and look for programs and everything, because it's almost all encompassing. Like, other kids may be taught that, but then the parents are looking for the video, or looking for the material, or whatever. This is a program that already has that information and material. So you get to actually enjoy the process.

Salma expressed appreciation for the affordability and effectiveness of the program:

> I'm just glad I have the chance to do it. And it doesn't cost me, doesn't cost me. Like even if it were to cost something reasonable, I don't think I would consider it because of the benefit. I'm so glad that the government has this to offer for so many immigrant moms. Because yeah, it definitely helps children.

She wished more mothers would access this resource. She said, "Why not take advantage? Why not have so many more people learn about the benefits, and to take

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advantage of it the way we have done?"

Additionally, parents described their experiences of participating in HIPPY as organized and easy to follow. For instance, Kate shared that HIPPY provided "a very straightforward way and very easy way, how to teach and how to connect to your children." She shared that she would not know how to teach them without it:

> Because I don't know what to do, and I don't know how to teach my children, and I don't know. Maybe I could do some Google. But with doing HIPPY, there's a specific guide. How to read, and how to play, and not only the coaching the academic way, they also coaching the relationship with the children.

Olinda agreed:

> It is good for me too, you know. I don't have that experience. My first kids, I usually read books and do what I do. But the HIPPY program there is a certain schedule, how to do your literacy program, what you need to do, what activity to do, and it's easy to follow.

Prior to starting the program, Laura said, "I don't know what to do and I don't know how to teach my children," but HIPPY was "very, very simple" and "very organized." She said, "You only need to pull the things, to take the materials, and to do." Elida described a similar experience. She felt that HIPPY gave her all of the "tools." "And now I just need to do it. And that's it," she said. She shared:

> That is what I needed. Because before that I was watching Youtube for things for preschool but it's not the same. It's not the same. Because you can watch a Montessori video. And you can teach your kid to, I don't know, to make a painting. Yeah. But you don't know the purpose of that.

This allowed Elida to provide her daughter with engaging learning experiences, something she wanted to do before HIPPY:

> HIPPY, for me, makes my life easy. So I want to teach something. I want to do something with my daughter. I want her to be like, "Mom,

wow, that is amazing." Like, look like, "Oh, Mom, you're so smart."
Right? But I don't have time to create a program like HIPPY, right?
Even if I want.

Elida said that HIPPY provided the "answers" to how and what to teach her daughter.
Salma also compared the differences between teaching her children on her own to
teaching with HIPPY. She said, "It's not the same, trying to teach your child something at
home, just for the sake of teaching, you know? Like when you go to Winners, or
somewhere, and you just grab a book" with the idea of teaching "some capital letters and
some lowercase letters." She preferred "having a curriculum to follow that tells you" what
to do next. "What I like" about HIPPY, she said, is that "it is very structured." Mukisa
appreciated this as well. She believed teaching her children without HIPPY would "not
look as structured or as organized." Zahra also reported finding the program "very
functional, helpful, and practical."

While HIPPY provided structure, participants also felt that it allowed flexibility.
Two mothers touched on the flexibility of the program with regard to scheduling and
expectations. Mukisa said, "I would say that the program, the home visitor and the
director, they made it very clear that there's flexibility. There's flexibility in the scheduling.
Sure there's expectation of the commitment, but there's flexibility within that
commitment." This helped her to feel supported. Salma found there to be flexibility in the
activities. She said that her home visitor did not mind if her family did things differently
than instructed:

> The program is structured, but somehow you have some flexibility.
> Which you always need. Especially with children at such a young age.
> You always need to have a little bit of a flexibility, right? So even when
> I have done things, you know, a little differently, [my home visitor] is
> like, "That's great. Yeah, you still got to achieve the goal you wanted
> to achieve at the end."

One way that Salma modified the program for her family was by incorporating her home
language and culture in HIPPY activities. She was "very strong on teaching them
Spanish," so she translated the whole first year of the HIPPY curriculum. She said, "The
activities, the songs, everything, I translated." This amazingly had a relational impact too.
"The language also helped us to attach even more," she said.

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Support during the pandemic

Several parents noted the benefits of participating in HIPPY during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a helpful resource that allowed parents to keep their children busy and learning during stay-at-home orders, which parents described as a time of limited resources and heightened stress. For instance, Zahra's husband David shared that HIPPY was helpful, "especially during COVID-19." He shared:

> For some time, it was not possible to visit friends, and not possible to go outside, and it is not easy to tell four or five years old kids not to play with others, not to be close to others and you need to keep social distance. It's very difficult to tell him to follow those rules. And most of the time, we had to make sure that he didn't go outside. HIPPY gave us great activities and ideas to entertain our son at home, and we use those ideas as alternatives to going outside.

Elida also found it helpful that HIPPY activities could be done indoors during the pandemic. She said, "Another thing that HIPPY helps is all the material can be done inside of house. Not necessary to do it outside. So for example, there are physical activities. But you can do it in your living room." She said even "physical activities" for "motor" development could be done inside. Laura appreciated the same thing. HIPPY provided new activities to do at home with her son, especially during the winter and pandemic. She said, "Sometimes you're like, 'Okay, what can I do?' I do the activities. It's a good help. Especially for the COVID, you have the opportunity to do something different." She discussed the stress of the pandemic, and how HIPPY relieved the pressure to come up with activities during this time:

> It's a big challenge now. Because when you listen, nobody can go outside. And nobody can have a relationship with another's friends. Like wow, that was a change for you because you need to create something at home. But HIPPY helps. That is a good thing, that HIPPY helps. Because you say, okay I have this activity, I don't need to create something for him.

Kate and Olinda shared these challenges and experiences. Kate said, "And because of the COVID situation, everyone is very limited. So it's the only way I can do some

activities with my children." Olinda shared, "I'm really appreciative for the HIPPY program because HIPPY program makes us busy… Even COVID now, here everything is closed, and we can't go anywhere. But we can have fun doing the activities and enjoying." While discussing what life looked like for her during the pandemic, Olinda said HIPPY was part of her schedule that kept her family busy and happy, "The thing is, we have the programs. We have the HIPPY program and we have the schedule for learning the piano, and we go to the library and get the books." Salma also found HIPPY supportive during this time. She said:

> Like everybody else, we're stuck at home. So we took that as an opportunity, and having HIPPY, having the program available to us helped us to enjoy, and to learn, and to share more as a family. I know that's the case of not many people. But for us, I'm happy and proud to say that it has affected our relationship with the family positively.

Further, Salma found HIPPY helpful while schools were closed. She explained, "It helped us also with the online classes process that we had to go through because of the pandemic. So the school shut down, while we were still, you know, last year. And she had to be online." Luckily, HIPPY was another avenue for her children to learn during this time. She added, "So that was good also, to continue to help her with her literacy and in other areas."

Support with child development

Participants proudly described their children's development in relation to HIPPY. As they noticed that the program was working for their child, they began to feel confident in their child's skills and at ease about any initial concerns. This subtheme speaks to parents' satisfaction with the program in supporting their children's school readiness. In the words of Salma:

> I think part of the HIPPY, besides the attachment, and that the beautiful part of it, the mother-child, or the father-child, family attachment, is having the children be so familiar with school. Like with the process and everything. So that when they go to school, they don't find everything misaligned.

She added, "I see the advantage. I do see how all that effort of taking the time, and sitting, and teaching them, and sharing with them, has paid off this year," and, "We are just helped and have so much more advantage in school. Right?" She described that this ultimately helps her whole family:

> [HIPPY] is something that I do because there is a lot of benefit in it for my children, and for myself, and for my family. And because if the children are well, the children do well in school, the whole family is going to do well. Understand that global, the whole benefit of the program, right? I do have a lot of nieces and nephews and I can relate with children who have had a hard time in school, and how it affects the entire family. How it stresses the mom, how it stresses the grandmother, how it stresses the aunts, how it stresses everybody. And how it becomes a bigger and bigger problem.

David, Zahra's husband, found the program to be "significant" for their son's development. He said, "For Xavier, the program is very critical and actually very helpful." He "improved his skills, improved his language," and "developed his talents." Translating for Zahra, he added, "now when Xavier goes to the kindergarten, he will be prepared. He has already fully prepared to start learning at school, and also fully prepared how to deal with other kids." Before the program, "He was a little bit aggressive, and not social at all. Now he's getting better, he's learning faster and he is cooperating with us much better than before." He continued:

> She said that usually when we go to the park with our friends, Xavier usually doesn't play with other kids. He always sits alone, and refuses to join others, but now this is not the case. He is now playing with others and he talks with other kids, playing with them, cooperating with them… Actually, for me, the best thing I have noticed is his English. It is getting better. Because you know, language is the most important communication tool. Without language, he couldn't communicate with others. His English gets better with time, and that helps him a lot to communicate with other kids.

As a result, David felt comfortable that his son was ready for kindergarten. He said, "He knows how to deal with friends, not to be aggressive, and to cooperate." This reduced their concerns, "Without the program, I think it will be very difficult for him to go to school. He will face a very difficult time at the beginning of his learning," meaning all of them

would have "suffered." Because of this, he said, "The program came at the right time for her. She's very happy for that." Aden noticed similar developments in her son. She shared, "After participating in HIPPY… he's able to understand, and he's able to cooperate. And he's able to follow the instructions." She added, "He's improving his social skills and communication skills" and he's "playing and sharing." Aden reported that her son "can understand and he can tell more" because "he has more vocabulary now." She found it helpful that she was learning how to teach him English though HIPPY. She said, "because otherwise I don't know how to teach that" and, "I don't know how to introduce little things to him because our language is not English, but HIPPY does." Laura shared that her oldest son learnt how to speak English quickly after they started with HIPPY, "I remember when I started with the first boy, I do all the activities. And he started to speak more, more, and more! And I said, 'Wow! It is working.'" She explained that her oldest son "started to speak around three years," but her younger son started speaking earlier, "because he listened to the stories at the same time." Mukisa reported that both of her children had increased confidence in their learning due to HIPPY:

> It does seem like subconsciously, the learning with HIPPY is helping them at school. To see familiar things, familiar concepts. Sometimes they'll recognize an activity in the HIPPY homework that they had done in school already. "Oh, my teacher showed me that," and then sometimes it was vice versa. So I find that that kind of experience, that memory for them, builds their confidence.

Olinda was also happy to report that her daughter was becoming increasingly confident through HIPPY. She provided an example of this where her daughter displayed prosocial behaviour and confidence in her learning at school:

> One of the teachers pointed to me, "Ava is very helpful and some kids can't do the job or can't do the activity, but she goes there. She offers to help. Because she already knows and then she helps them." That's very good to know. I was very happy to hear that point. She's not just learning for herself. She's learning for sharing and helping the others to develop at the same time.

Throughout the interviews, all participants excitedly discussed other examples of their children's development in academic skills such as reading, writing, math,

and science, and social-emotional skills such as curiosity, creativity, and confidence.

Parenting guidance

Participants shared a common experience during the interviews of wanting to be good parents and make the right choices for their children, but not always knowing how. HIPPY eased these concerns by providing guidance and advice. Parents felt comforted by having this reliable point of reference to visit with regards to parenting when needed. As they participated and watched their children learn and grow, they also surprised themselves in their ability to teach, and felt confident in their parenting. Kate shared, "Doing the HIPPY activities, I can make confidence that I can be a good teacher for my children." She felt proud of what she had learnt:

> I can be a good example for my children. But also, I can be a good teacher for them. Because I never had confidence that I can teach something to my children. But after I experienced HIPPY, now I have confidence I can be a good coach, I can be a good teacher for my children. Because now I know how to teach them counting. But not only the counting, how to write. But also, now I've learned myself how to tell them, how to teach them gently, with patience.

Kate also said the program helped her to handle difficult parenting situations, "It's kind of my Bible whenever I have trouble with, especially the bigger one, now she's in grade two so sometimes she talks back to me [laughs]. Yeah, so it's kind of like a parenting Bible for me." Mukisa shared a similar statement, "I think [HIPPY] is a treasured toolbox for me right now. It's like my back pocket survival card sometimes." Mukisa used HIPPY to redirect and refocus her children because they respond well to it. She said, "For example, 'Oh, we got so distracted today.' And then I'll use HIPPY homework as a redirection. Like a grounding. Redirection to ground us a little bit. To reign us in a little bit." This also helped her to refocus, "I do feel like I get back on track myself when it's HIPPY homework time." Mukisa was also gaining confidence as she experienced shifts in her values and discovered that she was capable of teaching her children. She shared:

> So I think, along with that change of the priority, and the value, and the experience, positive experience, and the open space, is that

confidence as parents. You know, not just leaving all the teaching to the outside world. Yeah, that kind of teaching can happen from home. Beforehand, right?

Olinda believed that HIPPY made her a better parent. She said, "It makes me educated more as a parent" and "It's actually made me a good parent." Chiku was another mother that felt confident in her new approach, "I like the HIPPY way I am teaching her," she noted. Laura felt assured that she was doing the right thing by becoming involved in her son's education. She shared:

> You take the education in your hands, yes? It's my child, I need to understand, and to involve in everything that he did… It's like, it is your child you know? You need to pay attention, you need to understand… To take time because as I say, you have a lot of activities at home, a lot of things to do, but taking the time for your child is the best way, the best investment that you can do with your child. Because you're creating more relation, you understand more the behaviour.

Elida maintained similar values. HIPPY helped her feel like she was meeting her child's needs and provided answers to her parenting questions. She shared:

> I am a mother that promised herself, you are going to do everything that your child will need… I think when, as a mother you think like that, you find programs like HIPPY. Because HIPPY has an answer of what you want to teach your daughter.

Chapter 5.   Discussion

In this chapter I provide a discussion of the findings in relation to the study's purpose: exploring mother's experiences of relating to their child in Multicultural HIPPY and filling a gap in the HIPPY literature. I first provide an overarching summary of the research findings and then explain the significance of these findings in relation to existing research, along with research implications.

5.1. Summary of findings

This study found that Multicultural HIPPY supports parent-child closeness through four main pathways. First, the program encouraged frequent parent-child quality time, helping parents and children get to know each other. This increased parents' understanding of their child's unique personalities and strengths, while also increasing children's sense of comfort with their parents, evidenced by more child-initiated conversation. Parents learnt through HIPPY that they could turn mundane tasks into educational experiences for their children, allowing parents and children to spend more time interacting in meaningful, child-focused ways. Several parents reported that they had already valued spending quality time with their child, but previously did not know how to fit this into their busy schedules. HIPPY therefore provided the structure that allowed parent-child quality time to become routine, and parents appreciated this opportunity to slow down and be present with their children.

Second, HIPPY supported warm and responsive parent-child interaction through fostering positive, evidence-based parenting approaches. For one, participants discussed their newfound value of playing with their child; they learnt how to use play as an educational tool and as a way to connect with their child emotionally. They were also using more encouragement and positive feedback while teaching their child, rather than criticism or punishment when their child made mistakes. Further, parents became more patient, gentle, and accepting of their child's needs and pace of learning, as they learnt through HIPPY that acquiring new skills often takes time and frequent repetition. In addition, parents became closely attuned to their child's needs. Some noticed for

example that their child was a more effective learner when they paid attention to their child's needs for breaks and rest.

Third, participating in HIPPY was an enjoyable experience for parents, children, and families, creating an environment of shared positive experiences. This supported positive parent-child interactions and motivated parents and child to continue participating together. For example, children expressed genuine excitement about HIPPY activities, and parents spoke about the fulfilling experiences of being able to teach their children, learn alongside their children, and keep their families busy and entertained at home. They reported that other family members such as siblings and fathers were interested and enjoying HIPPY activities, creating new opportunities for positive family interaction.

Fourth, HIPPY provided support to newcomer parents, which reduced their stress and allowed them to be more available for their children. Participants felt supported in their adjustment to Canada through improving their English and learning more about Canadian culture. They gained social support from their home visitors during a time of isolation. They also felt supported as parents due to the program's accessibility, timeliness in providing help during the pandemic, effectiveness in promoting school readiness, and useful parenting advice. This ultimately improved parent confidence and helped parents feel at ease about previous parenting stressors. These experiences gave participants a sense of control and competency around their parenting and involvement in their child's education.

5.2. Significance of findings

This study fills a gap in the literature, as it is the first study to focus solely on parent-child relationships within HIPPY. It was also the first study to explore parent-child relationships in the specific branch of Multicultural HIPPY in Canada, designed for newcomer families. While parent-child bonding in HIPPY has been touched on in a few previous studies, this thesis paints a fuller picture of what this meant to participants based on their specific contexts and lived experiences. These findings have positive theoretical implications for HIPPY children's development and HIPPY parents' quality of life.

This study also diverges from previous HIPPY research that has typically reported on parent and child outcomes separately. Parent and child outcomes are not clearly teased apart in this study as it became apparent that supporting one was related to supporting the other. That is, positive changes to parents resulted in positive changes to children and vice versa. Therefore, this study provides a family systems lens to HIPPY by viewing the parent-child dyad as a unit that experienced change together.

5.2.1. HIPPY supports meaningful change to the parent-child relationship

These findings strengthen existing HIPPY literature while adding to it in multiple ways. The findings of this study align with previous research that has found parents to feel an increased sense of closeness, bond, or attachment with their child through participating in HIPPY (Brown, 2019; Liddell et al., 2009; Nathans et al., 2020). These findings are important because decades of research has reported that close parent-child relationships are optimal for child development. Parent-child relationships play a large role in children's developing social, emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities, with effects lasting until adulthood (Sroufe, 2005). This study built upon these findings by exploring how this occurred and what it meant for parents to feel closer with their children. For example, it confirmed that not only does HIPPY increase the amount of time parents and children spend on educational activities together (Palladino, 2016; Mothers Matter Centre, 2020), but HIPPY increased the amount of time that parents felt fully present with their children. This had meaningful relational impacts such as an increased sense of knowing and understanding their child. It also helped participants to see their child in a more positive light. Some were noticing their child's unique strengths for the first time and some were impressed by their child's intelligence, curiosity, or creativity. According to participants' stories, it is possible that children felt this shift. Children possibly felt increasingly seen, heard, accepted, and connected to their parents.

Parenting changes

This study also added to the HIPPY literature on specific parenting changes. The findings support those of Holmes (2020), who found HIPPY to be significantly associated with parent levels of encouragement, responsiveness, and affection, though they add to the literature that participants described increased playfulness, patience, attunement, and acceptance towards their child. More importantly, this study found that participants were not changing their parenting approaches because they were advised to do so, but because they were becoming more in tune with their child and their child's needs. They reported feeling grateful to have these new tools and they were happy to be implementing them and sharing them with others, once again illustrating what HIPPY meant to parents.

Towards secure attachment

Based on these findings, HIPPY parents were engaging in behaviours that encourage and maintain secure attachment with their child. As described in Chapter 2, secure attachment is characterised by the provision of a safe haven (i.e., a space of emotional availability and comfort when the child is in distress), and secure base (i.e., a space from which a child feels free to explore and take risks) (Bretherton 1997; Brumariu & Kerns, 2010; Cassidy, 1994). Participants demonstrated providing a safe haven for their children in their stories of increased patience and acceptance when their child was struggling with a new skill in HIPPY, and attunement when their child was tired and needed a break from learning. Essentially, participants described examples of learning to respond with sensitivity to their children's emotional needs, which facilitates the development of healthy coping and emotion regulation skills in children (Cassidy, 1994). Participants also described providing a secure base for their children in their descriptions of increased play and encouragement. In playing with their child and allowing their child to take the lead, parents were providing a space for their children to explore their environment. In encouraging and praising their child while they were developing new skills, parents were reminding their children that it is okay to make mistakes, fostering their child's confidence in learning and taking risks.

Towards authoritative parenting

Participants also described moving closer towards an authoritative parenting style. Of Baumrind's four parenting styles, authoritative parenting is optimal for child development, as outlined in Chapter 2 (Baumrind, 2013). It is characterised by providing high levels of both responsiveness (i.e., attunement and emotional support) and demandingness (i.e., structure and control) (Baumrind, 2013). Participants described increased responsiveness through their stories of spending increased quality time together, where they gave their children their full attention and gained a greater understanding and appreciation for their child. They also demonstrated responsiveness in their increased awareness of their child's needs and willingness to accommodate them, and in their increased encouragement, patience, and gentleness when their child was experiencing the challenge of learning a new skill. Participants were naturally providing higher levels of demandingness through following the structure of the program. Participating in HIPPY requires developing a consistent routine of engaging in learning activities, teaching increasingly challenging skills that build on one another, and positively shaping children's behaviour to be ready for school. It is important to note that *authoritative* demandingness is different from *authoritarian* demandingness in that it values the child's perspective and is open to negotiation (Baumrind, 2013). Participants demonstrated this as well in their stories of allowing their child to make changes to activities and remaining flexible with their HIPPY routine based on their child's needs. Other parents in this study described a shift away from authoritarian parenting in that they were working to reduce harsh parenting behaviours such as scolding and blaming. These parents described a willingness to work with their child rather than against them when they encountered challenges. These findings are in line with previous research that has found HIPPY to be related to a decline in hostile parenting (Barnett et al., 2011).

Significance to children

Strong parent-child relationships importantly build children's mental health and social-emotional functioning. Children in these relationships develop an understanding of themselves as valuable and worthy, and form the belief that others in the world are safe (Bretherton, 1992; Ooi et al., 2006). They also observe prosocial skills being modelled by their parents, helping them to develop necessary social skills and form healthy relationships with others (Bretherton, 1992; Ooi et al., 2006; Sroufe, 2005). Secure parent-child relationships are associated with stronger emotion regulation skills,

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improved confidence and self-esteem, increased positive affect, more cooperative friendships, and increased empathy towards others (Clark & Ladd, 2000; Ontai & Thompson, 2002; Raikes & Thompson, 2006; Sroufe, 2005; Thompson, 2015). Secure parent-child relationships are inversely associated with internalising behaviours (e.g., sadness or fear) and externalising behaviours (e.g., aggression or impulsivity) (Brumariu & Kerns, 2010; Cassidy et al., 2013; Ooi et al., 2006).

Programs that support parent-child relationships are important because rates of mental illness in children in Canada are surprisingly high and treatment is often inaccessible. 14% of children in Canada between the ages of four and 17 experience mental health concerns that cause significant disruption to their day-to-day life, and less than 25% of these children receive treatment (Waddell et al., 2005). Newcomer children and parents may be at a greater risk of mental health concerns due to immigration related stressors such as social isolation, living with low SES, language and cultural barriers, and discrimination (Beiser, 2005). Thus, HIPPY could be a helpful resource in building resilience in newcomer children and preventing mental health challenges from starting in the first place. This idea is consistent with the findings of Koop et al. (2022), where HIPPY children demonstrated improved social skills and reduced externalising behaviours such as hyperactivity, aggression, and conduct problems after participating in the program. Based on the findings of this thesis, HIPPY is likely improving children's social and emotional well-being by way of improved parent-child relationships.

Further, social and emotional well-being is a necessary aspect of school readiness. Social-emotional skills allow children to regulate emotions that can disrupt learning, have motivation to set and accomplish goals, overcome challenges, and cooperatively work alongside others in the classroom (Ragozzino et al., 2003). In fact, preschool and kindergarten teachers tend to value social-emotional skills over language, literacy, and math skills as they help children adjust to classroom norms, providing the scaffolding for greater learning to take place (Hollingsworth & Winter, 2013; Lewit & Baker, 1995). They are also beneficial in the long term as social-emotional skills in kindergarten are significantly predictive of graduating highschool on time, completing post-secondary education, and acquiring stable, full-time employment in young adulthood (Jones et al., 2015). On the other hand, social-emotional skills are inversely

predictive of requiring special education services, receiving public assistance, and engaging in criminal activity (Jones et al., 2015).

Essentially, the role of the parent-child relationship cannot be overstated. It is a huge resource for children in developing resiliency in their personal and professional lives, especially among those that are considered at-risk due to SES or cultural background (Bernstein et al., 1991; Gregory & Rhimm-Kaufman, 2008).

5.2.2. HIPPY supports participants as newcomer parents

The findings of this study are also significant to parents. They echo well-established research that HIPPY reduces parents' social isolation (Barnett et al. 2012; Brown, 2019; Koop et al., 2022; Liddell et al., 2009; Liddell et al., 2011), increases parents' confidence (Barnett et al. 2012; Brown, 2019; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Nievar, 2018), and improves children's school readiness skills (Brown & Lee, 2017; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Johnson et al., 2012; Nievar et al., 2018; Payne et al., 2020). However, this study provided additional context and meaning around these topics for parents. Mainly, participants were appreciative of the program at this time in their life as they were raising young children, adjusting to life in a new country, and navigating parenthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. Receiving this support reduced participants' social, emotional, financial, and parenting-related stressors. This finding is in line with those of Koop et al. (2022), who found that HIPPY had a positive impact on parents' mental health and social-emotional functioning. This speaks to participants' needs that are being met through HIPPY.

Reduced parenting stress

Participants reported feeling reduced stress about their child's development, a finding that mirrors those of Holmes (2020). As participants gained an increased understanding of their child and saw their child progressing through HIPPY, they were feeling less worried about their child's occasional struggles along the way, and increasingly confident about their child's academic future. They also felt excited about discovering their new role as a teacher for their children. Parents found this especially

helpful during COVID-19, when children had to stay home from school and parents were responsible for enforcing educational activities and keeping their children busy.

Participants also felt reduced stress about parenting overall. They felt like they had a better handle on engaging with their children and felt like they could enjoy the process of teaching and playing with their children. This was partly because HIPPY provided the materials and instructions, allowing them to follow along with ease, and partly because the program was working for them, allowing them to trust that it was setting them up for success. One parent reported that she could turn to HIPPY in moments of stress with her family, to help them settle and "get back on track."

Reduced immigration-related stress

These findings are especially relevant for a population that is going through the stressful life transition of immigrating and settling in a new country. Many newcomers face acculturative stress (i.e., the stress of adjusting to a new culture), social isolation, low SES, and cultural and racial discrimination (Beiser, 2005). Additionally, the stress of these experiences may have been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic when data collection took place (Beiser, 2005; Gadermann et al., 2021). Fortunately, participants described HIPPY as a helpful source of support in Canada. They were happy to improve their English through the program, learn about the Canadian education system, and receive advice about Canada from their home visitors. One participant developed a close friendship with her home visitor. These experiences likely reduced acculturative stress and social isolation, and increased feelings of inclusion. Several participants acknowledged the stress of their current financial circumstances, and how they were appreciative that HIPPY was free to participate and did not contribute to this stress.

It is also possible that HIPPY may help to reduce intergenerational cultural dissonance, a common phenomenon in newcomer families in which parents and children grow up in different cultures and experience conflict with one another related to differing values (Choi et al., 2008). Intergenerational cultural dissonance can create family discord and distance between parents and children (Choi et al., 2008; Samuel, 2009). However, a close and respectful relationship between parents and children provides a buffering effect (Choi et al., 2008; Paat, 2013). Also, conflict is less likely when parents

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acculturate at a similar pace as their children (Paat, 2013), and HIPPY helps with this by bridging home and school. As we know, HIPPY increases parents' engagement in learning activities at home and communication with their child's school (Barnett et al. 2012; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Johnson et al., 2012), and this study found that HIPPY helped foster parents' understanding of Canadian culture. This could reduce HIPPY children's sense of living between two separate cultures at home and at school, which can be stressful (Choi et al., 2008).

Increased family enjoyment

This study was unique in capturing newcomer families' true enjoyment of HIPPY. Though other research has found HIPPY parents to provide positive feedback about their experience (Vazsonyi et al., 2008), parents in this study openly and enthusiastically praised the program. This was a notable finding as parents were not specifically asked about this. Participants had the freedom to share any stories they wanted to on their experience in HIPPY as it related to changes in themselves, their child, and their family during the interviews. They were also welcome to veer off topic if something salient about their experience in the program came up. Remarkably, many participants' chose to share their positive perspectives of HIPPY. They excitedly shared that HIPPY was fun, rewarding, and provided enjoyable experiences for their family that may not have occurred otherwise. This points to another potential need among families that was met through HIPPY, the need for light-heartedness and play. Parents were happy to learn that going outside or playing with toys was a need for their child, allowing them to relax into this time together.

Impact on children

Social and emotional wellness in parents translates to social and emotional wellness in children (Beiser et al., 2014). This is because parent stress and mental health concerns compromise parents' ability to respond to their child's needs (Beiser et al., 2014; Lorber & O'Leary, 2005; Raikes & Thompson, 2006). For example, newcomer parent levels of depression, somatization (i.e., physical symptoms associated with psychological stress), and resettlement stress are linked to children's emotional problems, often as a result of increased harsh parenting and family conflict (Beiser et al., 2014). Responsive parenting on the other hand supports children's social-emotional,

academic, and cognitive development (Browne et al., 2018; Dearing & Tang, 2010).
Thus, supporting children often involves supporting parents (Beiser et al., 2014;
Bernstein, 1991). According to the findings of this study, HIPPY does just this. Not only
does the program explicitly promote responsive parenting, but it does so implicitly by
looking after the needs of parents. It is possible that this increased family cohesion may
also reduce the risk of intergenerational cultural conflict between parents and children in
newcomer families (Choi et al., 2008).

5.2.3. HIPPY as mental health promotion and prevention for children

Adequate mental health care for children requires four main efforts: promotion,
prevention, treatment, and monitoring (Waddell et al., 2005). Mental health promotion
refers to fostering healthy development such as reducing social and economic
inequalities and funding child care and early learning (Waddell et al., 2005). Prevention
involves reducing risk factors of mental health disorders such as poor parenting and
neighbourhood violence, and increasing protective factors such as building resilience in
children through improved social skills, academic skills, and self-concept (Waddell et al.,
2005). Treatment includes approaches such as school counselling, individual and group
counselling, hospitalisation, and family support programs, used once mental health
concerns have already been identified (Waddell et al., 2005). Monitoring refers to
measuring the outcomes of these services to see if they are effectively accomplishing
their goals of reducing symptoms or reducing the incidences of mental health disorders
in children (Waddell et al., 2005). Based on the findings of this study, HIPPY is building
resilience in children through mental health promotion and prevention efforts. HIPPY
demonstrates mental health promotion by improving social support in a socially
disadvantaged population and providing early learning opportunities for a population at
risk of educational disadvantage. HIPPY also demonstrates prevention of mental health
disorders through reducing poor parenting and increasing child resilience through
improved school readiness and strengthened parent-child relationships.

The implication that HIPPY is contributing to mental health efforts builds on the
findings of Koop et al. (2022), who found HIPPY to be related to decreased externalizing
behaviours and increased adaptive functioning in children. However, HIPPY has typically
not been considered as playing a role in mental health, possibly because mental health

efforts in Canada and other countries are largely focused on treatment services (Greenberg et al., 2017; Waddell et al., 2005). This is problematic because treatment can be expensive for both individuals and communities, mental health disorders become more difficult to treat when they are not addressed early on, and many treatment systems such as schools lack the resources to be effective (Burns et al., 1999; Greenberg et al., 2017; Waddell et al., 2005). On top of this, most children with significant mental health concerns face barriers to accessing treatment (Barican et al., 2021; Waddell et al., 2005). In addition to being costly, treatment systems are often understaffed, have long wait times, can be confusing for those who do not know where to get help, are fragmented and disorganised across disciplines (e.g., special education, social work, psychology, and psychiatry), and unfortunately remain surrounded by social stigma (Moroz et al., 2020). There is also a lack of culturally competent mental health care in Canada, and newcomers may experience additional stigma around seeking help (Sim et al., 2023). As a result, many children and youth do not have their social and emotional concerns addressed and symptoms continue into adulthood (Barican et al., 2021; Moroz et al., 2020). Ideally, mental health care should be balanced between promotion, prevention, and treatment (Greenberg et al., 2017). This is why researchers call for increased mental health promotion and prevention approaches that can reduce the burden of mental health care on treatment systems, are cost-efficient, and have a wider and more effective reach (Greenberg et al., 2017; Waddell et al., 2005). Schools continue to play a large role in this through teaching social and emotional learning, though interventions like HIPPY can help to create change through shifting the norms at home toward healthy social and emotional development (Greenberg et al., 2017). In fact, all education programs that involve families provide an important opportunity to educate parents about the importance of parent-child relationships, without the stigma (Scharfe, 2011). According to the findings of this study, HIPPY is naturally supporting mental health without it being the focus, which is particularly helpful for those who experience barriers and stigma to receiving mental health care (Sim et al., 2023). The shifts that occur through promotion and prevention may be slight for each individual, but powerful for the population as a whole (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Chapter 6.   Conclusion

This study found that Multicultural HIPPY supported close and supportive relationships between parents and children among participating families. For one, this was fostered through the structure of the program, which creates the opportunity for quick, daily experiences of quality time. Second, it was connected to a shift in parents' approaches to teaching and playing with their child, characterised by increased warmth and responsiveness. Third, HIPPY provided an enjoyable curriculum that created positive and light-hearted shared experiences for parents, children, and other family members. Fourth, both the program design and home visitors attended to the needs of newcomer parents, reducing parent stress and allowing parents to be more available for their children.

These findings were significant to parents and children, as the program met their needs both directly and indirectly. For example, it is already relatively well-established that HIPPY directly improves school readiness in children (E.g., Bradley & Gilkey, 2002; Brown & Johnson, 2014; Brown & Lee, 2017; Johnson et al., 2012; Nievar et al., 2018; Payne et al., 2020) and social connectivity in parents (E.g., Barnett et al. 2012; Liddell et al., 2009; Liddell et al., 2011). However, this study added to the literature by shedding light on indirect and more nuanced outcomes of HIPPY through hearing parents' stories. It asked parents what HIPPY meant to the parent-child relationship, and discovered that HIPPY was indirectly meeting children's needs for an attentive, accepting, and more regulated parent, and indirectly meeting parents' needs for increased understanding of, appreciation for, and enjoyment with their child. This lays the groundwork for a closer and more secure parent-child relationship. Though we know that HIPPY aims to break the cycle of poverty by supporting children who are educationally disadvantaged (Mothers Matter Centre, 2019), HIPPY may also be breaking cycles of harsh parenting and insecure attachment. To conclude this study, I discuss program recommendations, study limitations, and future research directions.

6.1. Program recommendations

This study found that Multicultural HIPPY fosters stronger family ties. This suggests that the program may be more comprehensive than expected. It does more than help children and parents with their individual needs such as preparing children for school and connecting parents to their new community because it also strengthens the bond between them. These findings have the potential to attract additional families to participate in Multicultural HIPPY. For example, parents who are looking for a way to strengthen their relationships with their children, parents who want to learn more about parenting in Canada, or parents who simply want to have fun and try something new with their child. These findings could also attract additional funding organisations, such as those that value family cohesion and child mental health, to support the program.

While parent-child relationships within HIPPY have been touched on in prior studies, these relational outcomes could be taken more seriously. In the words of Bernstein et al. (1991, p. 28), "strengthening the parent-child relationship must be a priority for any program or practitioner providing services to young children and their families." Given the significance of parent-child relationships on children's future academic success and satisfaction in life, this is worth adding to routine evaluations. HIPPY is committed to conducting ongoing research and revision. Therefore, changes to parenting, parent-child closeness, and child social-emotional well-being may be equally valuable to track as children's academic progress. As we know, positive relationships are foundational for children in learning new skills (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006).

A recommendation that follows from this observation is that home visitors could gain additional training on this so they are able to teach parents more explicitly about the importance of parent-child relationships and how to improve them. For instance, home visitors could be taught the basics of attachment theory (i.e., how to provide children with a "safe haven" and "secure base") or parenting style (i.e., the benefits of providing high levels of responsiveness and demandingness) to refer to during home visits when needed. However, intervening in this way would require home visitors to develop a significant level of trust with parents due to the emotional nature of family work (Bernstein et al., 1991). Home visitors could do this by modelling what they are teaching to the parent by being gentle in their approach, using high levels of encouragement and

praise, and being patient in expecting change (Bernstein et al., 1991). They could also provide positive reminders of how special a parent-child relationship is (Bernstein et al., 1991). It would be important that home visitors empower parents to create change by encouraging them to consider the reasoning behind their parenting behaviours, rather than telling them what to do (Bernstein et al., 1991). Based on the findings of this study, building trust and fostering empowerment is something that home visitors already seem to be doing a successful job of.

6.2. Study limitations

This study has several methodological limitations. First, it is important to note that the interviews captured participants' perceptions of HIPPY rather than directly observed effects. While participants in this study shared many common perceptions about the impact of HIPPY on their parent-child relationships, the size and significance of these effects cannot be measured with interviews. Future research could build on the findings of this study by conducting quantitative, quasi-experimental research on parent-child relationship changes during HIPPY. For example, the Parent-Child Relationship Scale (Driscoll & Pianta, 1992) could be used to measure changes to parent-child relationships before and after HIPPY participation. Another way to strengthen findings would be to include multiple sources of data. This study only used parent-report to answer the research questions. It would be valuable to hear the perspective of home visitors on this topic as well, as they visited with the parent-child dyad once per week and may be privy to relational changes. Plus, participants in this study self-selected to participate. It is possible that the participants who chose to complete a 40-60 minute interview on their experience in HIPPY had stronger opinions or a more impactful experience in the program compared to a random sample of participants.

Another limitation is the possibility of other unobserved variables that may have affected the parent-child relationship. For example, the participants in this study participated in HIPPY during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is possible that spending more time together at home contributed to a sense of increased family closeness. Because of this, a question about the impact of COVID-19 on parent-child relationships was included in the interview guide. Another possible reason for perceived closeness could be increased parent-child time together if the family has been socially

isolated since immigrating to Canada. Children may have spent more time with extended family members and other caregivers, rather than their parents, prior to immigrating. In considering this, it could have been useful to include a question about this in the interview guide for those who immigrated with their children (e.g., "How did your relationship with your child change after immigrating to Canada?"). This being said, qualitative research cannot tease variables apart as methodically as quantitative research can.

Furthermore, there may have been language and cultural barriers during data collection. For one, interviews were conducted in English and many participants spoke English as an additional language. This may have affected many participants' ability to fully express their thoughts and experiences. These barriers can also raise the potential for misunderstandings and loss of meaning in communication (Li, 2011). In addition to this, parenting can be a sensitive topic for some and this can lead participants to filter their responses in ways they believe are socially desirable (Morsbach & Prinz, 2006). Finally, interviews took place online over Zoom. While there are many benefits to this such as having access to a larger and more inclusive sample, limited disruption to participants' schedules, and a lower cost of participation, there are also limitations. Online video communication reduces body language and emotional cues, and can limit the ability to build rapport, especially when meeting for the first time (Gray et al., 2020). Meeting in person or having multiple interviews may have increased participants' comfort and candidness.

6.3. Future research directions

This study lays the foundation for several areas of future research. It provided insight into several parenting shifts that are occurring in HIPPY, and these concepts could be strengthened by assessing them quantitatively with a larger sample size. Though one study has looked at the relationships between HIPPY and parent levels of affection, responsivity, encouragement (Holmes, 2020), it would be interesting to assess parent levels of communication, understanding, playfulness, patience, acceptance, and attunement with their child as well. It would also be interesting to look at the impact of HIPPY on child attachment style and parenting style. In addition, acculturative stress was a common lived experience among the participants of this study, and future

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research could examine the effects of Multicultural HIPPY on this quantitatively. Moreover, future research should compare HIPPY participants with non-participants. For example, parent-child relationships, specific parenting skills, parenting style, attachment style, and child mental health could be compared between groups to see how they measure up both before and after HIPPY participation.

Further, future research could assess longer-term impacts. As mentioned, school-related outcomes (e.g., test scores, attendance, school suspension, and classroom behaviour) have been found to last until grades three, five, six, and nine (Bradley and Gilkey, 2002; Brown and Lee, 2014; Johnson et al., 2012; Nievar et al., 2018), and it would be useful to know if family-related outcomes last as well. It would also be helpful to know if there are different results based on the number of years mothers and children have participated in HIPPY. For example, are there differences in parent-child relationships between those who have completed one year, two years, or three years of HIPPY?

Next, this study brought up questions around additional family member participation in HIPPY. For example, fathers were involved to different extents and future research may want to explore how HIPPY impacts fathers and their parenting approaches. For instance, are fathers picking up new parenting strategies from mothers and implementing them as well? Mothers and fathers that engage in HIPPY methods may have more powerful effects than mothers who participate alone, and it would be useful to look at this in the future. Additionally, it would be interesting to see if siblings are affected by HIPPY. This study found that siblings of HIPPY children, both older and younger, were frequently involved in HIPPY activities and it is possible that they may experience similar relational benefits.

Finally, research could more thoroughly examine challenges experienced during HIPPY, as this has less commonly been assessed. A few participants in this study mentioned the challenge of initially adjusting to the program before integrating it into their routine, and future researchers may want to delve deeper into where participants are experiencing challenges so home visitors can be well-equipped to address them.

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Appendix A. Recruitment letter to HIPPY coordinators

Dear HIPPY Coordinators,

My name is Camilla Enns and I am a Master's student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I am conducting a research project for my thesis called "A Narrative Inquiry of Parent-Child Relationships in relation to the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program (HIPPY)," supervised by Dr. Lucy LeMare.

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into how mothers experience HIPPY as it concerns their relationship with their participating child. This is an element of the program that has not been focused on in existing HIPPY research. Documenting stories of parent-child relationships as they relate to HIPPY may help attract additional families or funders to HIPPY, or identify areas for program development.

I am contacting you to invite mothers from your HIPPY site to participate in this study. I would like to interview around 10 HIPPY parents from across Canada, so even if you have only one or two interested parents, this would be great. Participation will require filling out a short demographic questionnaire and participating in a 40-60 minute Zoom interview in English. Each participant will be offered a $50 honorarium as a thank you for their contribution.

If you believe mothers from your site may be interested in participating, I invite you to pass along the attached letter to any HIPPY parents who have completed at least one program year of HIPPY, within the last two years.

Thank you for considering this request. If you have any questions about this research, you are welcome to reach out to me at [email address redacted] or my supervisor at [email address redacted].

Warmly,
Camilla

Appendix B. Recruitment letter to HIPPY parents

Dear HIPPY Parents,

My name is Camilla Enns and I am a Master's student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I am conducting a research project for my thesis called "A Narrative Inquiry of Parent-Child Relationships in relation to the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program (HIPPY)," supervised by Dr. Lucy LeMare.

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into how mothers experience HIPPY as it concerns their relationship with their participating child. This is an element of the program that has not been focused on in existing HIPPY research. Documenting stories of parent-child relationships as they relate to HIPPY may help attract additional families or funders to HIPPY, or identify areas for program development.

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in this study. To participate, you must have already completed at least one program year of HIPPY. Participation in this study will require you to fill out a short demographic questionnaire (5 minutes) and participate in a video-recorded Zoom interview (40- 60 minutes) in English. In this interview, you will be asked about your experience as a parent in HIPPY. I am particularly interested in how you think participating in HIPPY may have impacted your relationship with your child. We will schedule a time for the interview that is most convenient for your schedule.

At the end of the interview, you will be given a $50 prepaid Visa card as a thank you for your time and contribution to the research.

Participation in this study is voluntary, meaning it is your choice if you would like to participate or not. The study will also be anonymized, meaning your identifying information (such as your name and city you live in) will not be reported. If you change your mind about participating at any time, you may withdraw from the study without any consequences. Choosing not to participate or choosing to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the Mothers Matter Centre, or any services you can receive in the future or that you are currently receiving.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me at [email address redacted] or my supervisor at [email address redacted]. You can also reach out to us if you have any questions about participating.

If you know anyone else who has completed one program year of HIPPY and may be interested in participating in this study, you are welcome to give them a copy of this information.

Thank you for considering this request.

Warmly,
Camilla

Appendix C. Consent form

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research project called "A Narrative Inquiry of Parent-Child Relationships in relation to the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program (HIPPY)." This project is being conducted by SFU Master's student, Camilla Enns and her supervisor, Dr. Lucy LeMare.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into how mothers experience HIPPY as it concerns their relationship with their participating child. This is an element of the program that has not been focused on in existing HIPPY research. Documenting stories of parent-child relationships as they relate to HIPPY may help attract additional families or funders to HIPPY, or identify areas for program development.

Study requirements

Participation in this study will require you to fill out a one-page demographic questionnaire (5 minutes) and participate in a video-recorded interview over Zoom (40-60 minutes) in English. In the interview, you will be asked questions about your experience in HIPPY, any changes you may have experienced in your relationship with your child, any changes you have experienced as a parent, and any changes you have noticed in your child. This interview is intended to be conversational in nature, and you may share as much or as little detail as you are comfortable with. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed and sent to you to give you an opportunity to review the interview and make any changes you wish.

Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, meaning it is your choice if you would like to participate. Participation in this study is not a requirement of HIPPY, and participation or non-participation will not be reported to anyone. You may also withdraw from the study before, during, or after participation without any consequences. If you choose not to participate or change your mind after agreeing to participate, this will not affect your relationship with the Mothers Matter Centre, or any services you can receive in the future or that you are currently receiving.

You can withdraw by emailing either Camilla at [email address redacted] or her supervisor at [email address redacted]. However, you will not be able to withdraw your data once the results have been published. The last day to withdraw will be Mar. 1, 2022.

Confidentiality

All demographic questionnaires and interview recordings will be confidential and password protected, meaning no one will be able to view them outside of the research team. The data collected will be anonymized, meaning your identifying information (such

as your name, the city you live in, and your country of origin) will not be reported. You will also choose a pseudonym to be used in reports to ensure your privacy. The interview recordings will be destroyed after they have been transcribed, and all data will be destroyed upon completion of the research project.

Use of data

The information you provide will be used to tell different stories about the connection between HIPPY participation and parent-child relationships. These stories will be analyzed for common themes. As mentioned, names and other identifying information will be omitted to protect your privacy, but direct quotations of yours may be included. The findings of this study will be published in a Master's thesis, and may be used in future presentations and journal articles.

The results of this study will also be shared with and co-owned by the Mothers Matter Centre. The Mothers Matter Centre may post it on their platforms and use it for future projects and grant applications. This way, the research will be accessible to those who are involved with HIPPY.

Upon completion of the project, all participants will receive a one-page summary of the research findings via email. The research team will retain your email address to do this, and your email address will be deleted from our records when the summary has been sent to you.

Honorariums

Upon completion of the interview, you will be mailed a $50 prepaid Visa gift card as a thank you for your time and contribution to the research. Your address will be collected on the demographic questionnaire, and your address will be deleted from our records when you have received your Visa gift card.

Potential risks

The potential risks of participating in this study are minimal. No questions are intended to bring up uncomfortable emotions, though discussing experiences of immigration and parenting could bring up stressful memories for some participants. If you become emotionally distressed during an interview, you will be given the option to pause the interview (for a few minutes or the interview could be rescheduled for later), and you will be reminded of the option to withdraw from the study.

Potential benefits

The potential benefits of participating in this study include sharing your families' unique story of participating in HIPPY, gaining greater awareness of the impacts that HIPPY has had on your family, feelings of confidence or pride as a parent, and contributing to research that may help other families in the future.

Contact information

You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. You can contact Camilla at [email address redacted] or Dr. Lucy LeMare at [email address redacted] about any questions or concerns you may have.

Complaints

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics, at [email address redacted] or [phone number redacted].

Consent

If you would like to participate in this research, please sign below. Your signature confirms:
- You have been given sufficient time to read and understand the information about participating in this study
- You have been given sufficient time and opportunity to ask questions about this study, and you are satisfied with the answers to your questions
- You agree to have your interview video recorded
- You agree to the use of direct quotations
- You understand you are able to withdraw from the study at any time until Mar. 1, 2022 without having to provide a reason and without any consequences

_____   **_____**
Participant Name   **Date**

_____
Participant Signature

If you are unable to provide written consent, it is also an option to provide verbal consent. Please check the line below if you would rather provide verbal consent over Zoom. Your consent will be video recorded on Zoom instead. In this instance, we will also complete the demographic questionnaire verbally over Zoom.

___ I prefer to provide verbal consent on Zoom

Appendix D. Demographic questionnaire

About you

1. Your date of birth: _____

2. Who is in your household? _____

    a. Your child/children's age: _____

    b. Your child/children's gender: _____

3. Where do you live? City: _____ Province: _____

4. How long has your family lived in Canada? Years: _____ Months: _____

5. What is your country of origin? _____

6. What is your educational background?

    _____

7. What is your household's annual income?
    __ $0 - $20,000
    __ $20,000 - $40,000
    __ $40,000 - $60,000
    __ Over $60,000
    __ I don't know

8. Provide a pseudonym of your choice (a fake name to ensure your privacy and confidentiality): _____

Your participation in HIPPY

9. What year did you participate in HIPPY? _____

10. How many years did you participate in HIPPY? _____

11. How many children did you participate in HIPPY with? _____

12. Where did you participate in HIPPY? City: _____ Province: _____

Your address: (this will be used for sending your $50 honorarium via mail)

_____

Appendix E. Interview guide

Greeting

Hello! Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today. It's nice to meet you. How are you doing today?

I would first like to introduce myself. My name is Camilla and I'm a master's student at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. I am particularly interested in children and families, which is why I'm researching the HIPPY program for my master's thesis.

Introduction to interview

I have about nine questions to ask you that I may also ask some follow-up questions about. I'm particularly interested in any stories or examples you would like to share.

This interview is intended to be more like a conversation than a formal interview. You may share as much or as little as you are comfortable with, and you can pass on any questions that you don't want to answer. I might take a couple of notes while you're talking; if you see me writing, that means I'm making a note of something I want to follow up on.

Do you have any questions about participating in the interview before we get started?

Are you ready for me to begin recording?

Interview questions

1. To start, tell me about you and your child's experience in HIPPY.

2. How do you think participating in HIPPY has impacted your relationship with your child?
   - Follow up if needed:
     - What is an example of this?
     - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.

3. How do you think participation in HIPPY has impacted your family or household?
   - Follow up if needed:
     - What is an example of this?
     - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.

4. How do you think participation in HIPPY has impacted you as a parent?
   - Follow up if needed:
     - What is an example of this?
     - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.
   - If not already touched on, ask about:
     - Parenting values
     - Parenting beliefs
     - Parenting behaviours

5. How do you think participation in HIPPY has impacted your child?
    - Follow up if needed:
        - What is an example of this?
        - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.
    - If not already touched on, ask about:
        - Child's social-emotional skills
        - Child's overall well-being, mood, or behaviour
        - Child's academic skills

6. How do you think COVID-19 has impacted your relationship with your child? (For example, due to staying home more often, changes in employment, or general feelings of uncertainty)
    - Follow up if needed:
        - What is an example of this?
        - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.

7. What challenges did you experience between you and your child while participating in HIPPY?
    - Follow up if needed:
        - What is an example of this?
        - Tell me about a moment or experience where you noticed this.

8. What do you imagine your relationship with your child might look like if you had not participated in HIPPY?

9. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience participating in HIPPY?

Closing

Thank you so much for participating.

As a thank you for your time and contribution, I will be sending your $50 prepaid Visa card in the mail. Over the next few weeks, I will be transcribing this interview into written form. I will then send you the written document so you can review it and make any edits or changes to the interview if you wish. This will be to ensure you are comfortable with all of the information you have shared today.

Do you have any questions before we log off today?

Thank you again for sharing your story.