

HIPPY Toronto Newsletter

June has marked the end of the 2010/2011 HIPPY year. We held 5 HIPPY-graduations in June! **The Davenport/Perth, Francophone and Karen communities' graduation ceremony** was held on June 4th, each ceremony included the presentation of certificates, fun activities for the kids, family testimonials, cultural performances by the community volunteers, and of course, some graduation cake! Working Women Community Centre's board members attended this ceremony. The **Thornclyffe & Flemingdon Park** ceremony was held on June 10th and included cultural performances; "The Chinese Lion Dance" and "The Colombian Salsa Dance" were performed by the community volunteers. The **Malvern** site-graduation ceremony was held on June 11th with a "Tamil Cultural Dance" performed by the HIPPY kids. City Councilor, Raymond Cho attended that ceremony. The **Victoria Village** graduation was held on June 12th with a raffle draw for kids and cultural performances. HIPPY Canada board members joined us at this graduation ceremony, and presented the certificates to the HIPPY families. The last graduation ceremony was held at **Jane & Finch** on June 18th, and included performances by the HIPPY kids and community volunteers. City Councilor,

Anthony Perruzza attended that ceremony. It has been rewarding for the HIPPY team to host the HIPPY graduation ceremonies, and see the families graduate from the program and achieve their goals.

"My son and I love HIPPY. When we start doing HIPPY activities, it's hard to stop as we like it so much." HIPPY Mom



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"My daughter is only three and thanks to the HIPPY program she already has an evening reading routine. If I forget to read to her, she always reminds me in the morning."

Moo Lay Pay, HIPPY mom, June 2011.

"I think the best of HIPPY is that my wife becomes a real teacher for our children. When the home visitor leaves, she practices what she has learned from her with our daughters' every day." Jorge-

HIPPY Dad- June 2011.



Celebrating Cultures

FUNDRAISING JAZZ NIGHT FOR HIPPY

This year HIPPY Toronto participated in the Upper Canada College "Jazz Night" Concert for the third year in a row. This event was organized by the school's senior Jazz Ensemble to support the HIPPY program and families. We would like to extend our special thanks to the Upper Canada College Jazz Ensemble Musical director and musicians and wish them all the best on behalf of the HIPPY families.



"I have HIPPY everywhere!"

HIPPY Mom

Cultural Celebrations

At HIPPY Toronto we recognize and respect the diverse cultures of our families, so, cultural celebrations are an important part in our program. Every year, we celebrate many religious, traditional and

cultural events with our - families. The HIPPY families actively participate in these events and share their cultures and traditions through food, folkloric dances, and other fun activities. The events that were celebrated at each site include: Chinese New Year, Karen Nation New Year, Norooz (Persian New Year), Diwali, Mexican National Day, Ramadan, Eid, and many more. We also proudly celebrated Canadian official celebrations with the HIPPY families as well.



HIPPY Toronto in the News

This year HIPPY Toronto was featured in the media. An article featuring the success story of one of our families was published in the *"Toronto Star"*.

HIPPY, a program for immigrant preschoolers that works (by Catherine Porter)

I find homework time with my 5-year-old, Lyla, challenging. She gets frustrated when the sounds she makes don't match the letters laid out on our kitchen table at night, and I am less than perfectly patient. It's been a long day already.

I can't imagine how hard it is for Ta Kaw Paw. She belongs to the Karen ethnic group and is a refugee from Burma. When she was around six, the army stormed her village and burned it down. Her family hid in the jungle for years before moving into a crowded refugee camp across the river in Thailand. She went to school for only a few years. She never owned a book. Even if she had, there was no one to read it to her — both her parents were illiterate.

Now 22 and living in a highrise near Jane and Finch, how is she supposed to help her 5-year-old daughter, Htoo Paw Say, to read — especially in a language she doesn't even speak?

You can see why some kids are already behind by Grade 3. I visited Ta Kaw Paw's immaculate home with Than Dar Oo, a part-time HIPPY worker at the nearby Working Women Community Centre.

HIPPY stands for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters. It's a 30-week program developed in Israel 40 years ago to help new immigrant parents prepare their kids for school. The parents are visited every week by a worker like Than Dar Oo, who goes over homework

to do with their children for 15 minutes every night that week. Over the course of the program, 3-year-olds are introduced to books, numbers, shapes and sizes, and almost more important, so are their parents.

"These parents are coming from all over the globe," says Stefania Ntonas, a HIPPY program coordinator in Toronto.

"In many places, the teacher does everything for the child and the parents don't need to be involved as much. Here, the system demands the parent to be the primary educator.

"The goal is readiness for school for the kids, but practically, it's all about the adults."

Bill Clinton is a big fan of the program. So is Immigration and Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney (although his ministry carved back its funding recently). There are dozens of reports from all over the globe that show it works — kids are better prepared for school, their reading levels are higher than average, their vocabularies are richer, and they have more solid relationships with their parents.

Those 15 minutes a night make for bonding time.

Other reports show the mothers become more involved in the community and school because of the confidence gleaned from the program. In Toronto, most of the 25 home visitors like Than Dar Oo are in the program themselves, getting their first "Canadian experience" in the workforce. Than Dar Oo is also a Karen from Burma. The HIPPY job helped her to get part-time work working with Karen refugees at the airport, she says. Sometimes simple ideas work.

Here's another cool thing: it was Jane-Finch parents who demanded the program six years ago during the "Summer of the Gun," when young black men were getting shot down like flies around Toronto.



Since then, it's expanded to six sites around the city, serving families from North Africa, Afghanistan, China, and Iraq. . .

The Karens, though, face the steepest learning curve, Ntonas says.

Most, like Ta Kaw Paw, have languished for years in refugee camps with little or no education.

"She wants me to read to her," Ta Kaw Paw tells me in Burmese through a translator as her daughter picks up a copy of *Where's Spot?* "I read as much as I can. If I don't understand, I ask her what it's about."

Yet there are obvious signs of progress. For the first time, there are books in the house. Daughter Htoo Paw Say settles behind a pink Disney desk set up in the living room to draw. Taped to the wall above is a bristol board with the letters of the alphabet neatly printed out?

"Her teacher says she's improved in writing and reading and her English is improving," Ta Kaw Paw says proudly. Perhaps the best indication is Htoo Paw Say's little brother, Eric.

He is only 2. But already, he is sitting on the floor, patiently cutting up a piece of paper with miniature scissors, just like he saw his sister do.

I leave, thinking this family might have a chance after all.

A New HIPPY Book

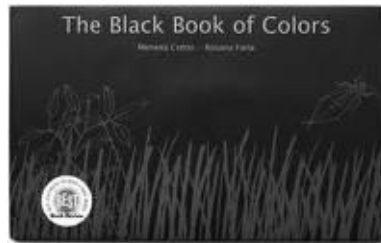
The Black Book of Colors
by **Menena Cottin**
Illustrated by **Rosana Faría**

Published by: **Groundwood Books**

It is very hard for someone who can see to imagine what it is like to be blind. This book tries to show the experience of a person who can only see through his or her sense of touch, taste, smell or hearing.

Thick black lines let you feel the picture drawings on black paper, with beautifully written words describing colors through imagery. Braille letters accompany the words so that the sighted reader can begin to imagine what it is like to use Braille to read. A full Braille alphabet at the end of the book can be used to learn more.

The Black Book of Colors has been published around the world and is praised for its unique and innovative approach.



“HIPPY books are the only books we have at home.”

HIPPY Mom

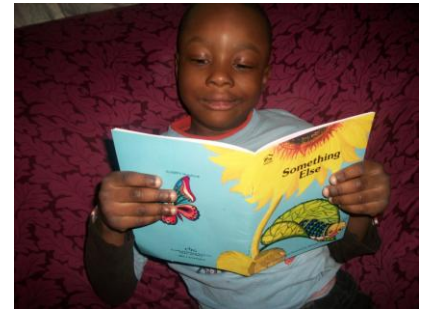


Because of HIPPY:

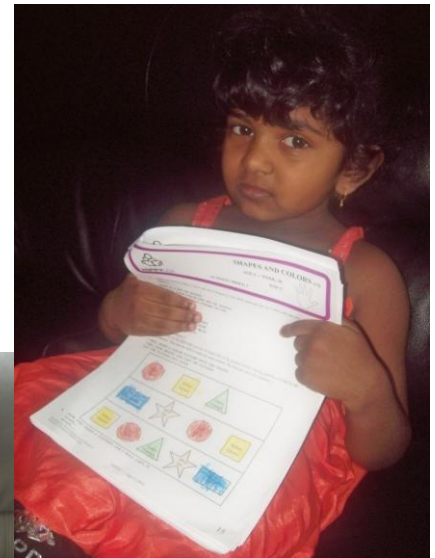
Treana, wants to know the author and illustrator of every book which is read to her or she comes across.



Julia, who is getting ready for school has learned her colors from the book of Colors.



Yara, has been recognized in his day care. He loves to take his HIPPY books to school to show them to his teacher. She has noticed that he has become more confident, and his performance in class has improved significantly.



A Story from a HIPPY family:

My name is Anastasiya, I'm a HIPPY mom.

I started to participate in the HIPPY program (my friend recommended it to me) last October, with my 4 year old son Kevin, and home visitor, Kaberi.

We immigrated to Canada a year-and a half ago from Kazakhstan and now live at Flemingdon Park area, my son goes to JK in school.

Kevin is very happy when I tell him that now we are going to do some HIPPY activities, because they are fun, full of interesting and not boring activities, they help him to learn more English words and they help me to bond and spend a good time with my son! Now I also have a newborn baby boy Richie (5 weeks)!

I read the letter about the HIPPY Family Newsletter and that you are accepting some stories or recipes from parents.

My son always participates with me in the process of baking (he loves homemade cookies and cakes :-), so I am sending you one of our recipes:

Russian Apple Pie

Russian apple pie is a traditional autumn bakery.

Ingredients:

3 average sour apples
3 eggs
1 cup of sugar
3 table spoons of butter
1 table spoon of sour cream
1 1/2 cup flour
1 1/2 tea-spoon baking soda
1/4 tea-spoon of salt
1 tea-spoon of fresh lemon juice

Method: Peel the apples and slice into thin pieces. Mix eggs and sugar with a mixer. Add butter, sour cream, salt, flour, baking soda and lemon juice gradually. The dough must be liquid as sour cream. Brush baking pan with some butter and flour or use parchment paper. Put all apples on the bottom of the pan. Pour the dough into the pan evenly. Heat the oven (350 F) and bake the pie for 20-30 minutes (check readiness with a dry wooden pin or knife). When the pie is ready, put the pan on a wet napkin for 5 minutes, it helps to detach the pie from the pan. Enjoy with ice-cream or tea!



Arts and Crafts Corner

Alphabet Book

Make a simple Alphabet Book from construction paper and pictures cut out of old magazines or catalogs.

Supplies needed:

Old magazines, catalogs, or newspapers with pictures
Glue stick or glue
Scissors
Construction or lined paper
Crayons or a marker
Hole punch
Some string or yarn

Method:

1. Punch a few holes along the margins of 14 pieces of construction paper (or use regular lined paper with holes).
2. Tie the book together with string or yarn.
3. Put a personalized title on the cover and a few cut-out pictures (the child's photo or an "A" word, a "B" word, and a "C" word).
4. Write a large letter on each page of the book.
5. Go through the magazines and catalogs with the child, looking for simple pictures of easy words that start with different letters of the alphabet. Cut out the pictures. To help the child learn the alphabet, say the words out loud and have the child try to guess what letter each word starts with. Paste the picture on the page with that letter of the alphabet, and label the picture.

6. You can also have the child draw pictures on the pages.

7. This picture book can be a rainy day activity that you finish over a long period of time. You can use the alphabet book to help the child learn the alphabet long after the book is done.



HIPPY Toronto Fun Activity Page

Connect the dots and Color me. Have fun!





About HIPPY Toronto



HIPPY, (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) is a home based program which recognizes the parents to be their children's first and best teachers and that the ideal time for children to start learning is in their early years. For newcomer families who do not have the tools or language skills to prepare their preschoolers to enter school, HIPPY provides parents with these tools and supports. Working Women Community Centre's HIPPY program not only empowers parents to help their children successfully enter the school system, but at the same time, provides newcomer families with settlement supports that decreases isolation, improves their English language skills, and eases the settlement, integration

and engagement process into Canadian society.

"I couldn't believe when I heard that this fantastic program is FREE!"

HIPPY Mom

"My daughter has become student of the month in her school! You can't imagine the happiness I feel!"

HIPPY Mom

Feedback from a home visitor:

Happy to be with HIPPY;

During my outreach for the HIPPY program at Grenoble Public School, and Flemington Parenting- Centre, I met a newcomer mom. Her big concern was about her 3 year old son not speaking at all. She told me that there was a long waiting list for Speech and Language Pathologists in order to just simply make an appointment. She asked me, "How can you help me?"

I introduced myself and my role, and also introduced her to the wonderful HIPPY Program. I told her that through Role Play she can gain the confidence and knowledge about Healthy Child Development. My reassurance, experience and trusted relationship with the mom helped and worked.

She started the program immediately, and after six months of being with the HIPPY program, we both saw the results, what a huge-difference in this child! Now she is almost finishing the Age 3 curriculum and sharing all her happy experiences with me. Now every time they are in a parenting program, her son is interacting with others, sharing, and engaging with other kids in circle times. His communication level has improved lot. His mom is so thankful to the HIPPY program, I am also happy for them.

By Home Visitor Kaberi Dutt-Choudhury

HIPPY Toronto runs from different neighborhoods in Toronto in partnership with local community organizations.



Our Partners are

- ❖ **Malvern Family Resource Centre**
- ❖ **Rouge River Ontario Early Years Centre**
- ❖ **Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office**
- ❖ **Flemingdon Neighborhood Services**
- ❖ **Davenport/Perth Neighborhood and Community Health Centre**

Contact us directly or visit us on the web at www.workingwomenc.org

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