



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Families and Children Activity

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters

Operational Guidelines 2022-2027



Version Control

This table confirms timing of revisions and endorsement of these Operational Guidelines.

Version	Changes	Date
1.0	Approved Operational Guidelines	10 December 2023
2.0	Approved updated Operational Guidelines	5 December 2024

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1. Preface

These Operational Guidelines relate to the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), funded by the Department of Social Services (the department). The primary purpose of the Operational Guidelines is to assist the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) and HIPPY Sub-Licensees in the delivery of the program. This document outlines the key elements of service delivery and seeks to clarify policy and process questions that may arise during the delivery of HIPPY.

The Operational Guidelines are a living document. As additional issues arise, and policy clarifications are developed, these will be included in an updated version of these Operational Guidelines. Updates to the Operational Guidelines will be emailed to BSL's program schedule level contact listed in the department's Grant Payment System (GPS). Please ensure this contact detail is kept up-to-date with your Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM) as the first point of contact with the department.

BSL (and the HIPPY Sub-Licensees) have the responsibility to ensure they are familiar with all contractual (and sub-contractual) obligations including where these may change as the Operational Guidelines are amended.

The Operational Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the:

- [Families and Communities Program, Families and Children Activity Guidelines](#)
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Conditions (Schedule 1)
- Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement Supplementary Provisions
- [Families and Children Administrative Approval Requirements](#).

1. Families and Children's Activity

HIPPY is a Children and Parenting support program and a component of the Families and Children (FaC) Activity of the overarching Families and Communities Program.

The FaC Activity aims to support families, strengthen relationships, improve the wellbeing of children and young people and increase participation of people in community life to enhance family and community functioning.

The objectives of the Families and Communities Program and the FaC Activity align with objectives in the:

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- *Safe and Supported – the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031.*
- *Early Years Strategy 2024-2034.*
- *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031.*
- *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.*
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership.](#)

The department encourages service providers to understand Commonwealth initiatives and strategies and consider how the design and delivery of their services can contribute to achieving the intended outcomes.

2. Overview of HIPPY

HIPPY is a two-year, structured home-based parenting and early childhood learning program that supports parents and carers to be their child's first teacher. The program builds the confidence and skills of parents and carers to create a positive home learning environment to prepare their child for school. It also offers some parents and carers a supported pathway to employment and fosters local community engagement and leadership.

BSL, through HIPPY Australia, has an exclusive licence from HIPPY International to run the program in Australia, which is delivered in selected disadvantaged communities by existing not-for-profit organisations in each location. BSL contracts out the day to day management of delivering HIPPY locally through a Sub-Licence with around 65 not-for-profit providers that operates as a funding and service agreement. More information about the HIPPY providers is at Part 9 below.

Further information about HIPPY can be found at:

www.hippyaustralia.org.au

<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services/families-and-children-activity>

3. Aims and Objectives of HIPPY

The aim of HIPPY is to build the confidence and skills of parents/carers of children in remote, regional and communities experiencing disadvantage, to create a positive home learning environment that assists children prepare for school and strengthens the parent/carer child relationship. The HIPPY program aims to provide short, medium and long term outcomes for children (aged three and four), families (parents/carers), families in their communities, and training and employment (parents as HIPPY tutors).

The HIPPY objectives are to:

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

Benefits for children include:

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

Benefits for families include:

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

3.1 National Agreement on Closing the Gap

All Australian governments are working with First Nations people, their communities, organisations and businesses to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement).

The National Agreement is underpinned by the belief that when First Nations people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved.

This is an unprecedented shift in the way governments have previously worked to close the gap and is built around four [Priority Reforms](#) that are directly informed by First Nations people:

- Formal partnerships and shared decision-making.
- Building the community controlled sector.
- Transforming government organisations.
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

These reforms are central to the National Agreement and the department encourages providers to work towards embedding the Priority Reforms into the way services are designed and delivered to demonstrate an active role in contributing to the [Closing the Gap targets](#). This includes considering how to engage in genuine partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and local First Nations communities. Service providers are required to ensure their services are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of First Nations people.

Through specific projects approved in consultation with the department, BSL will look to improve the service delivery experience for First Nations communities by exploring how HIPPY could be further delivered in language.

Since 2022 BSL and select Sub-Licensees are participating in the Stronger ACCOs Stronger Families Part 2. The Stronger ACCOs Stronger Families activities are bringing together Facilitating Partners like BSL, Sub-Licensees and ACCOs to support genuine partnership between ACCOs and funded organisations under the FaC Activity. It is expected that BSL will use this project to identify opportunities to continue to transform the delivery of HIPPY in First Nations communities and reflect local needs and culture. For more information visit the Department [website](#).

4. Timeframe

These guidelines cover program delivery from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2027 inclusive, including continued program delivery in the 95 Service Areas around Australia (Statistical Area Level 3 (2016)), at around 100 selected sites.

5. Funding

More than \$380 million has been allocated from 2014–15 to 2026–27 to support ongoing program delivery of HIPPY across Australia.

The department has a Grant Agreement (2022–2027) with BSL to support the ongoing delivery of HIPPY in 100 communities across Australia.

BSL enters into 'sub-contracting-type' arrangements with not-for-profit organisations to deliver the program to the selected HIPPY communities.

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

The Grant Agreement specifies arrangements and requirements including:

- enrolment and retention targets
- employing HIPPY coordinators and tutors

- new location selection
- provider selection
- performance reporting
- assessment, evaluation and innovative project development, and
- payment milestones.

6. Governance and Assurance

6.1 Operational Management

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

The Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM) works with BSL in relation to:

- planning, administration and conduct of funding arrangement management activities
- gathering and analysing evidence to assess funding recipient performance
- identifying risks, issues and improvement opportunities.

The following documents inform and support effective management:

- HIPPY Operational Guidelines 2022–2027 (and as updated from time to time throughout the life of the HIPPY grant agreement).
- HIPPY Funding Agreements from 2015–2027 with reporting against milestones that includes (but is not limited to) an Age Three Transition Strategy and a Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Those two strategies will include risk assessment and mitigation strategies, developed by BSL, approved by the department, and reviewed annually.
- HIPPY Activity Work Plan (AWP), including BSL providing a new AWP annually, which may be further negotiated from time to time as agreed by both BSL and the department. BSL will also provide a six monthly report against the AWPs.

The following policies on the DSS and Community Grants Hub websites also apply to HIPPY:

- [Access and Equity Policy](#)
- [Complaints Process for Grant Recipients](#)
- [Grant Recipient Complaints and Whistleblower Provisions](#)
- [National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy](#)
- [Online Safety](#)
- [Vulnerable Persons, Police Checks and Criminal Offences](#)

7. Working with children

The department is committed to ensuring that our work and activities do not expose children to abuse and harm. As part of this commitment, the department has implemented measures to promote the safety of children in all services and activities that the department funds.

In delivering the HIPPY program to children, BSL is required to:

- Comply with Commonwealth, state and/or territory requirements relating to working with children in the jurisdiction in which the activities are delivered. This includes mandated police checks, working with children checks and working with vulnerable people checks.
- Comply with all relevant legislation in jurisdictions relating to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect as required or otherwise defined by state or territory legislation.
- Implement and meet the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations across all service delivery sites.
- Submit an annual statement of compliance, specific to the child safety clause in the grant agreement or contract.
- Impose the same child safety obligations in Sub-Licensee agreements.
- Provide training and establish a compliance regime that includes proactive monitoring to ensure that all Sub-Licensees meet their child safety obligations.
- Ensure all required checks are in place prior to any individual connected to the delivery of HIPPY services commencing employment.
- Notify the department of any failure to comply with the child safety clauses.

8. Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for organisations to adopt child safe practices including appropriate screening of staff, mandatory reporting and adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles).

In response, the Australian Government introduced the *Commonwealth Child Safe Framework* (the Framework), a whole-of-government policy that sets minimum standards for creating and embedding a child safe culture and practice in Commonwealth entities and Commonwealth funded third parties.

In line with clause CB9 of the Supplementary Provisions in BSL's grant agreement, all sub-contracted service providers must ensure delivery of HIPPY complies with the National Principles and other action for the safety of children, and relevant checks and authority. Under this clause, you are required to:

- submit an annual Statement of Compliance stating you have implemented the National Principles
- complete an updated risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for children and level of risk of harm to children
- have an updated risk management strategy

- provide training and a compliance regime.

It is the organisation's responsibility to understand their requirements and evidence their compliance with the National Principles.

Further information on the National Principles and providers' obligations is available on the [National Office for Child Safety website](#) and the Australian Human Rights Commission's [Child Safe Organisations website](#).

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions relating to DSS funded organisations are available on the [DSS website](#). Any additional questions regarding the Statement of Compliance Process should be directed to your FAM.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Department of Social Services

The department is responsible for policy considerations, administration, and managing the Grant Agreement between the department and BSL. The FAM is the first point of contact with BSL for day-to-day operational matters, and the FAM escalates to the Policy Team as required. The Policy Team deals with other non-operational and strategic matters in the first instance, in consultation with the FAM.

9.2 Brotherhood of St Laurence/HIPPY Australia

BSL (through HIPPY Australia) implements and manages the program according to the requirements set out in the Grant Agreement. The Head of HIPPY Australia, is the main point of contact with the department.

BSL has an exclusive licence with HIPPY International to run the program in Australia. BSL has the right to sub-licence in Australia and to enter into arrangements with not-for-profit organisations to deliver the program in the selected communities. The BSL Research and Policy Centre undertakes research on aspects of HIPPY with the prior written approval of the department.

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

9.3 Providers

The HIPPY Grant Agreement stipulates that the Activity will service 95 Statistical Area Level 3 (2016) service areas around Australia. The department does not select the providers who deliver HIPPY locally. BSL manages the selection of providers to deliver HIPPY by calling for Expressions of Interest, running information sessions for potential providers, and selecting suitable organisations through a competitive application process before entering into a Sub-License agreement with them. Whilst BSL manages the EOI process, they select suitable organisations in consultation with the department.

Selected organisations deliver the program in each HIPPY community in collaboration with the community and in accordance with their sub-licensing and funding agreement with BSL utilising the HIPPY resources and supports as provided by HIPPY Australia under the funding agreement.

10. Program Requirements

10.1 Delivery model

The HIPPY model has five essential features:

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

Parents and their children enrol in the program in the year the child turns three years old and participate for two years. Families receive 15 activity packs in the first year and 30 activity packs in the second year. Program activities are designed to be integrated into the daily life of the family. Each family participates in a curriculum of structured learning experiences that are aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework under the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.

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

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

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

10.2 Referral of families

HIPPY is a free of charge and voluntary program directed at parent with pre-school-age children. Families may hear about HIPPY from a variety of sources. This may be through referral by other support programs, by word of mouth, friends and family, advertisements in the local paper or through promotional posters around the community. Families may contact the local HIPPY coordinator if they wish to enrol or to find out if they are eligible to participate. HIPPY Sub-Licensees usually enrol children at the beginning of a school year, however where resources allow and Sub-Licensees can support their enrolment some families can be brought on later in a calendar year.

11. Priority Access

To be eligible to join the program, the family must have a child aged three in the year of enrolment and live in a catchment area where HIPPY is delivered. In addition, from 2019, BSL has recruited new families in accordance with its Priority of Access Guidelines to ensure targeted recruitment of disadvantaged families most in need of the program.

Priority access criteria include:

- the household holds a Health Care Card
- the HIPPY child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- the HIPPY child resides in out-of-home care
- the household has no income or receives a form of government support payment as their primary source of income
- single-parent families
- the child resides with a carer (i.e. not a parent)
- the main language spoken at home is not English
- the child has a developmental delay or disability and can engage positively in HIPPY
- the parent or carer lives with a disability or long-term health condition.

12. Service Delivery

12.1 Service areas

Since 2018, HIPPY has operated in 100 communities across Australia, 50 of which focus on delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

12.2 Community selection

The Australian Government selected the 95 service areas, Statistical Area Level 3 (2016), in consultation with BSL/HIPPY Australia and other key stakeholders.

The department and BSL monitor recruitment rates in each of the 100 sites that are across the 95 service areas, and Australian Early Development Census scores, to ensure the program continues to be delivered in locations most in need.

BSL will undertake a comprehensive review of the HIPPY sites in 2023-24. This review will inform a separate independent evaluation of HIPPY (2023-24 to 2025-26) and will incorporate latest population data, Australian Early Education Census, and 2011 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas.

13. Performance and monitoring

The department will monitor program implementation and delivery to ensure HIPPY is delivered according to Australian Government policy priorities as well as according to specific requirements outlined in the HIPPY Grant Agreement.

Key aspects of program implementation and delivery by BSL include:

- Transitioning the program to focus on children aged three and four.
- Ongoing program management across all 100 HIPPY sites, including providing advice, mentoring, support and HIPPY resources to program providers to ensure enrolment numbers are reached and numbers are retained and HIPPY sites are operating effectively and sustainably .
- Ongoing provision of additional support to sites with limited infrastructure or requiring specific supports, including engaging local strategies in collaboration with providers and communities in line with Practice Agreements.
- Implementation of recommendations from HIPPY evaluations.
- Reviewing and redeveloping the HIPPY curriculum, material and resources to ensure HIPPY continues to reflect evidence-informed early learning, parenting and employment approaches and practice.
- Engaging and collaborating with other services and networks.
- Contribute to building the capacity of and (where possible) engaging new Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations delivering HIPPY.
- Ensure the program delivery and outcomes aspire to the HIPPY Program Logic and Theory of Change.
- Continue to report outcomes in the Data Exchange for the HIPPY 2020 cohort onwards.
- Contribute to the department's Data and Outcomes reporting framework and Performance Measurement Framework.
- Allocation of sufficient funding to each HIPPY site to support efficient and effective delivery of the program.
- Support Sub-Licensees understanding of the legal obligations for working with vulnerable people and children and setting an active approach to managing compliance with HIPPY employees

14. Reporting

14.1 Data Exchange

BSL is required to report client data and service delivery information for all HIPYPY clients and from all Sub-Licensees delivering HIPYPY across all 100 HIPYPY sites, in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/>) and the HIPYPY specific guidance in the Program Specific Guidance for Outcome 2.1 Families and Communities Program in the Data Exchange ([Program specific guidance for Outcome 2.1 – Families and Communities Program | Data Exchange \(dss.gov.au\)](https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/#Program-specific-guidance-for-Outcome-2.1-Families-and-Communities-Program)).

The Data Exchange Protocols provide operational guidance to users of the Data Exchange. The Program Specific Guidance for Commonwealth Agencies assists managers and front-line staff to understand the data they must report in the Data Exchange.

The department publishes fact sheets, task cards, webinars and e-learning modules on the Data Exchange website to help service providers set up and perform different functions in the Data Exchange (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/training>).

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/>).

14.2 Data Exchange Partnership Approach

BSL is required to participate in the Data Exchange Partnership Approach. By participating, BSL reports client and community outcomes for HIPYPY children and families, and receive access to additional self-service reports. The department requires BSL to report outcomes using its Standard Client/Community Outcomes Reporting (SCORE) framework, which is a methodology for standardised reporting of outcomes data.

For further information on the Partnership Approach and SCORE, please refer to the Data Exchange Protocols (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/>).

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/>).

14.3 Guidance on measuring client and community outcomes

The department encourages all service providers to use validated outcomes measurement tools to measure client and community outcomes.

A 'validated tool' is an instrument that has been formally evaluated and psychometrically tested for:

- reliability (the ability of the instrument to produce consistent results)
- validity (the ability of the instrument to produce true results)
- sensitivity (the probability of correctly identifying a client with the condition).

For additional support, service providers can contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk (<https://dex.dss.gov.au/helpdesk/>).

15. Review Point

In 2024-25, the department will review the performance of BSL's delivery of HIPPY. The department will measure performance across the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2024 using the assessment criteria in the Appendix below. The department will notify BSL of the outcomes.

The Review Point is an opportunity for the department and BSL to check if the HIPPY Activity is on track, particularly after the transition to focus on children aged three and four, identify areas for improvement, and work together to achieve improved outcomes for families and children in Australia.

The department and BSL have set targets for client numbers and client demographics in the Grant Agreement and the AWP.

The department is committed to a holistic assessment of performance that considers the individual circumstances of service providers and the communities in which they operate. When assessing performance against the assessment criteria, the department will draw on qualitative information in AWP reports and other sources where relevant.

If BSL does not meet one or more assessment criteria, the department will work with them to improve performance. The department acknowledges that BSL may not meet some assessment criteria due to circumstances beyond their control. If BSL has credible reasons for not meeting one or more criteria, and the department has no further concerns, it may decide there is no need to work with them to improve their performance.

Please note the assessment criteria in the Appendix below are distinct from performance indicators in grant agreements. The assessment criteria measure performance against targets whereas the performance indicators measure performance by comparing similar service providers to one another. While there is some overlap in the types of performance measured by each method, the department will only use the assessment criteria to measure performance at the Review Point.

BSL should contact their FAM if they have questions about the Review Point.

16. Research and evaluation activities

As part of the delivery of HIPPY, in discussion with the department, BSL is able to conduct in-house research projects to inform program delivery and build the evidence base for HIPPY, for example, by examining effective recruitment and retention strategies and factors affecting participation by HIPPY families. BSL will not commission research with grant funding unless prior approval has been received from the department.

Each research proposal that is presented will be reviewed and assessed by the department with assistance from the department's Evaluation Unit. The selection criteria used to assess each proposal includes: demonstrated need for the research, appropriateness of the proposed methodology, suitability and ethics process in regards to research involving children, value for money, and provision of a plan for implementation of the research outcomes.

Independent evaluation activities may be commissioned by the department or BSL and will provide an opportunity to add to the evidence base and measure how effectively HIPPY contributes to key Government policy objectives (such as enhanced parental engagement and improving readiness for school), particularly as compared to other similar programs.

The department will be commissioning an independent evaluation to be conducted over three financial years, from 2023–2024 to 2025–2026.

Previous evaluation activities for HIPPY include:

- the evaluation of the national rollout of HIPPY in 2011, undertaken by Monash University in conjunction with BSL
- the evaluation of the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of HIPPY in 2017, undertaken by ACIL Allen Consulting.

17. General Requirements

17.1 Privacy

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

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

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

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

Visit website: www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy

Write to:

Privacy Officer
Legal Services Branch
Department of Social Services
GPO Box 9820
CANBERRA ACT 2601

or email:

DSSfeedback@dss.gov.au

Privacy complaints may be made directly to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), but will only be actioned where a complaint was made in the first instance to the department but was not dealt with to the complainant's satisfaction.

18. Freedom of information (FOI)

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

All FOI requests are to be referred to:

Freedom of Information Team
Government and Executive Services Branch
Department of Social Services
GPO Box 9820
CANBERRA ACT 2601

or email:

foi@dss.gov.au

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

19. Grant publication

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

20. Complaints

A complaint is defined as “*any expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service offered or provided*”, (Australian Standard, AS4269–1995).

The department has a formal complaints service and an unsuccessful community organisation or service provider can lodge a complaint by:

Telephone: 1800 634 035

Email: complaints@dss.gov.au

Post: DSS Internal Audit and Complaints Section
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

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

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

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

If a service provider or community organisation is dissatisfied at any time with our handling of their complaint, they can also contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.gov.au.

21. Communication and Promotion

BSL is responsible for maintaining up-to-date information about HIPPY on their HIPPY Australia website, and to encourage HIPPY sub-contracted providers to promote HIPPY in their communities.

22. Grant Recipient Portal

The Grant Recipient Portal is a platform where grant recipients interact with the department's systems and services to self-manage their grant information. The Portal has been designed to make grant management simple and easy. The Portal allows grant recipients to:

- access their grants information in one place
- view their activities and milestones
- download copies of their payment advices
- update their organisational details and adding additional organisational users
- update their organisation's bank account details
- submit financial acquittals
- submit Activity Work Plans.

The department encourages all grant recipients to use the Grant Recipient Portal. For further information on accessing and using the Portal, please visit the [Community Grants Hub website](#) or contact the [Community Grants Hub](#).

23. Hot Issues and Media

Demand for, and increased public, media or political interest/scrutiny will periodically spike due to a variety of issues, including:

- something that is of interest to the target group
- launches of new initiatives
- Parliamentary proceedings, including Senate Estimate hearings and Question Time.

Identifying these issues and sharing the information with the department will enable more proactive service delivery responses.

Service providers must also alert the department of any less urgent issues, particularly where they affect services to clients.

The department must be informed if service providers are planning to engage with the media. It is important that the department is made aware in advance of what issues will be raised as this will allow the department time to prepare for any follow-up enquiries and/or to brief relevant stakeholders as necessary.

24. Critical Incidents

BSL must notify the department of critical incidents *as soon as possible* within 48 hours of incidents occurring or within 48 hours of being made aware of incidents by Sub-Licencees.

To notify the department, BSL must complete the [critical incident reporting template](#) (page 4-6), which is available on the department's website, and email it to their FAM. BSL should telephone their FAM to advise the email is coming, and should confirm the department has received the email via telephone or an email read receipt.

[The critical incident reporting guideline](#) and template includes guidance, a checklist, examples of critical incidents and factors to consider when reporting a critical incident. The department expects all service providers to be familiar with the critical incident reporting template. Service providers must also advise the department when reporting the incident of actions being taken to mitigate risk and any investigations and potential resolutions of systemic issues contributing to the incident.

BSL is required to ensure that sub-licensees are trained in critical incident reporting requirements and ensuring that key personnel at sites are made aware of their obligations.

Appendix – Review Point Assessment Criteria

From 31 December 2024, the department will review the performance of BSL’s delivery of HIPPY using the assessment criteria in the table below. This process is independent to the FAM’s biannual DEX and AWP assessments.

If BSL does not meet one or more criteria, and cannot provide a credible justification, the department will work with BSL to improve performance and reserves the right to undertake any remedial action in accordance with clauses 2, 13 or 19 of the Commonwealth Standard Grant Conditions.

The following table sets out the Review Point Assessment Criteria based on the HIPPY Program Logic.

Reporting Requirements table

Requirement	Description	Measure
Participate in the Data Exchange (DEX) Partnership Approach	Report against appropriate outcome domains as specified in the Program Specific Guidance for Outcome 2.1 Families and Communities Program in the Data Exchange . Meet the minimum requirements for each client cohort throughout their HIPPY journey.	Minimum requirements for Data Exchange Partnership Approach include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 per cent of clients assessed for Circumstances. • 50 per cent of clients assessed for Goals. • 10 per cent of clients assessed for Satisfaction.
Submit Activity Work Plans (AWPs) and AWP reports	BSL is required to use a specialised AWP report template provided by the department.	Submit all AWP’s and AWP reports on time according to the milestone dates in the grant agreement.
Submit financial acquittal reports	All financial acquittal reports must be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the grant agreement and departmental guidelines.	Submit valid financial acquittal reports by the milestone dates in the grant agreement.
Submit HIPPY Data reports	Provision of BSL’s HIPPY program data as specified in the HIPPY Program Measurement Framework	Submit HIPPY data annually by the milestone dates in the Grant Agreement.

Data and Outcome Measurement table:

Requirement	Description	Measure
<p>SCORE Client Circumstances</p>	<p>Report against appropriate outcome domains as specified in the Program Specific Guidance for Outcome 2.1 Families and Communities Program in the Data Exchange</p> <p>Meet the minimum requirement for each client cohort throughout their HIPPY journey.</p>	<p>80 per cent of identified clients with a complete SCORE assessment for one or more Circumstances domains achieve a positive or neutral change in Circumstances.</p>
<p>SCORE Client Goals</p>	<p>Report against appropriate outcome domains as specified in the Program Specific Guidance for Outcome 2.1 Families and Communities Program in the Data Exchange.</p> <p>Meet the minimum requirement for each client cohort throughout their HIPPY journey.</p>	<p>80 per cent of identified clients with a complete SCORE assessment for one or more Goals domains achieve a positive or neutral change in Goals.</p>
<p>SCORE Satisfaction</p>	<p>Report against appropriate outcome domains as specified in the Program Specific Guidance for Outcome 2.1 Families and Communities Program in the Data Exchange.</p> <p>Meet the minimum requirement for each client cohort throughout their HIPPY journey.</p>	<p>90 per cent of identified clients with a complete SCORE assessment for one or more Satisfaction domains achieve a positive or neutral Satisfaction score at the end of their participation</p>

Requirement	Description	Measure
Short-term outcomes	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn new skills as they engage in HIPPY activities. <p>Families/parents/carers: are learning about their child's learning style and engage in educational activities in the home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a positive home learning environment that supports children's learning. 	DEX SCORE outcomes data – Circumstances and Goals domains
Medium-term outcomes	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have the skills, knowledge and confidence to actively participate in formal learning. <p>Families/parents/carers: are active and confident as their child's first teacher to prepare their child ready for school.</p>	DEX SCORE outcomes data – Circumstances and Goals domains

Key Program Targets table:

Requirement	Description	Measure
Enrolment numbers per annum	Enrol a minimum of 2,300 families and a maximum of 2,900 families aged 3 and 4 across the entire HIPPY program annually.	<p>This equates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a minimum of 1,450 families in established sites and 850 families for Indigenous focussed sites and more complex sites • a maximum of 1,750 families in established sites and 1,150 for Indigenous focussed sites and more complex sites
Client demographic targets	Meet the annual targets of diverse cohorts of children aged 3 years commencing year one of HIPPY	<p>Enrol a minimum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children age 3 • 300 children who report with a disability or developmental delay age 3 • 500 Cultural and Linguistically Diverse children age 3
Retention Rate	Across the entire HIPPY program, the retention rate of children progressing from age three to age four	Retention rate maintained above 75%