



Research and  
Policy Centre

# Transforming employment aspirations

Results of the HIPPY Tutors Study

Julie Connolly and Roxanne Chaitowitz

2020



Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Working for an Australia free of poverty

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) is a social justice organisation working to prevent and alleviate poverty across Australia. Our mission is to pursue lasting change, to create a more compassionate and just society where everyone can thrive. Our approach is informed directly by the people experiencing disadvantage and uses evidence drawn from our research, together with insights from our programs and services, to develop practical solutions that work. For more information visit <[www.bsl.org.au](http://www.bsl.org.au)>.

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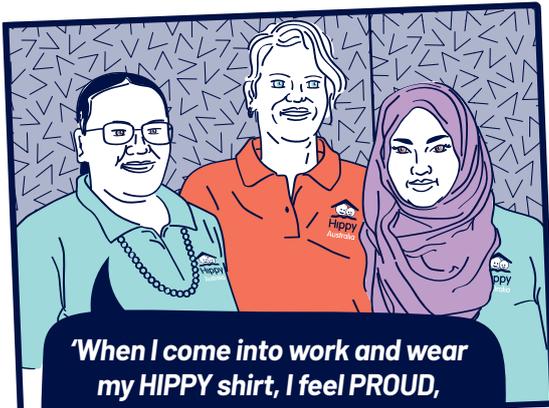
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# Snapshot of the HIPPY Program Tutors Study

Funded by the Federal Department of Social Services (DSS), the Brotherhood of St. Laurence delivers the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) in 100 Australian communities. This early learning and parenting program targets young children in low-income households and provides parents/carers with the confidence and tools to support their child's education. HIPPY helps families create a home learning environment which improves school readiness and the parent-child relationship. Our recent research found it also creates a transitional labour market for home tutors; meaning it builds skills, networks, and confidence that helps tutors transition back into work. A key feature is HIPPY's flexible and family-friendly approach.

## Most HIPPY tutors surveyed are female parents



**99%** female

**84%** have 2 or more children

**60%** live in regional or remote Australia

**40%** are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

**76%** employed prior to birth of first child

## After HIPPY, a majority of tutors wish to rejoin the labour market

**30%** employed prior to working for HIPPY

**65%** intend to find employment after HIPPY

## HIPPY tutors build human, social and psychological capital

Tutors experience professional and personal development

Employment is flexible for tutors

Tutors are paid



Mentoring & coaching



Psychological capital or self knowledge

Program delivery



Social capital or relationships

Training



Human capital or skills

## HIPPY increased job readiness and improved confidence



**95%**  
of tutors felt more job ready

*'The patience, confidence and the trust for both the family and myself has been an experience we will never forget.'*



**92%**  
said HIPPY increased their confidence

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The Brotherhood of St. Laurence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging.

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# Summary

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a multifaceted intervention for disadvantaged families with children aged between 4 and 5 years, which is organised around a two-year, integrated parenting support and pre-school learning program. HIPPY operates internationally and in 100 Australian communities where close to 4500 families participate each year. The program is largely delivered by home tutors, a peer workforce, drawn from parents, mostly mothers who are completing the program themselves. This is the first time that their experiences have been the main focus of study.

Building parents' capabilities is central to HIPPY's mission. The home tutors program works specifically to promote increased economic participation among women who have caring responsibilities for young children, and who have withdrawn from the labour force and likely face barriers to re-engagement. The HIPPY Tutors Study found that HIPPY effectively creates a *transitional labour market* for the home tutors. Tutors also participate in a professional development program that incorporates the principles of *substantive personalisation*, which are increasingly recommended for inclusion in effective employment services (Casey & Lewis 2020, Considine et al. 2018). The intervention is distinctive among labour market programs in Australia, and its success contains lessons for the design of employment services that share the same target group.

The study used an innovative online narrative collation tool that allows participants to signify, or interpret, their own contribution prior to completing a more traditional survey. The results confirm that HIPPY builds both the *human capital* and the *social capital* of tutors. Notable in the tutor narratives, however, was the level of personal change reported, which indicates that HIPPY also builds the *psychological capital* of tutors, meaning their self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. The experience is transformative and helps home tutors develop new aspirations for ongoing education and employment. The combination of flexible work in a structured program that builds home tutors' sense of personal agency while they undertake work that aligns with their values, produces these results.

## Research findings

Just over half of the 412 home tutors employed in 2019 and nearly three-quarters of site coordinators participated in the research.

### Tutors are job-ready

Some 95% of home tutors agreed or strongly agreed that 'working with HIPPY has helped me develop skills that will be useful for my future employment'. Although only 20% of tutors nominated 'wanting a job' as a reason they became a tutor, almost 65% wished to obtain further employment immediately thereafter.

### Tutors develop human capital and social capital

As a direct effect of the combination of work experience with structured professional development, tutors develop both human capital and social capital. The narratives consistently attest that tutors are constantly learning—about HIPPY, child development, the challenges of service delivery and associated administration, as well as about themselves—and thereby developing human capital. Social capital is built through the relationships that tutors forge with participating families and other local providers. Particularly for those from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, this also means assuming leadership in their local communities.

### Doing makes a difference: Tutors grow in self-efficacy and resilience

Some 92% of tutors either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'working with HIPPY improved my confidence'. It is clear that levels of self-efficacy are altered by undertaking program delivery. Tutors

receive positive reinforcement from task completion, which gives them confidence to nurture aspirations. Overcoming obstacles, in particular to self-confidence, is central to this process. Site coordinators also reflected on their own role in mentoring tutors to overcome such challenges. Working as a home tutor builds resilience.

### **Witnessing transformation in self and others leads to hope and optimism**

Both home tutors and site coordinators conveyed great pride in their work and deep personal and professional satisfaction in witnessing the transformation of others. Site coordinators nominated observing personal and professional growth in HIPPY tutors as a source of ongoing motivation and professional satisfaction. For tutors, seeing change in the families with whom they worked forged a sense of hope and optimism about their own lives and potential contribution to their families and communities.

### **Parenting is paramount: the importance of flexibility and values alignment**

Parenting remains central to the identity of tutors. For some tutors becoming a role model for their children is a primary motivation; for others supporting their own children's development supplies this incentive. The HIPPY Tutors Employment Program provides an opportunity to explore how their parenting role interacts with emergent professional aspirations. Given their caring responsibilities, tutors value flexibility in working hours, with 84% indicating that flexibility influences their decision to either take up work or additional hours.

### **Addressing challenges and futureproofing the program**

Workshop discussions deepened our understanding of the challenges faced by tutors and site coordinators. For tutors these mostly revolved around working with families with complex needs and finding ways to adapt the program to be even more culturally relevant and appropriate. Coordinators indicated that creating a transitional labour market (TLM) meant constantly recruiting new tutors. This sense of starting from scratch with each new cohort was a challenge and some coordinators worried that despite their growth while working with HIPPY, tutors required continued support to navigate the labour market.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been drafted to assist HIPPY Australia entrench and extend those aspects of the tutor program that effectively support tutors, particularly the development of human capital. The recommendations also recognise the considerable work that site coordinators undertake to realise the ambitions of the program for home tutors. They envisage the creation of additional networks for site coordinators and tutors.

- **Developing ICT skills:** These skills are central to labour market competitiveness, but their development among tutors seems somewhat uneven. Tutors would benefit from a more intentional approach to this.
- **Certification:** To advance the labour market competitiveness of home tutors, HIPPY should investigate the accreditation of the Pathways to Possibilities professional development program as a Certificate 1 qualification.
- **Advanced training options:** Given tutors' varying levels of prior work experience and education, HIPPY should consider the inclusion of accelerated and advanced models of skill development in Pathways to Possibilities.
- **Additional training modules:** Tutors would benefit from additional and specific training modules to increase their preparedness to work with complex families. This would include understanding vicarious trauma and how to successfully navigate the boundaries of their role while remaining attentive and responsive to families who experience crisis, especially when related to mental health or domestic violence.
- **A stackable system of recognition:** In developing this additional training support HIPPY Australia should create *stackable* modules within Pathways to Possibilities as a foundation for further certification in accredited training in community services and/or child care.
- **Regional communities of practice:** in light of the above recommendation and noting the struggles some coordinators have in managing a TLM that requires biennial staff turnover and new recruits with each HIPPY cohort, developing regional communities of practice may assist coordinators to workshop strategies and collate their learnings.

- **Continuing cultural adaptation:** While the narratives and workshop discussions confirm that some sites work on ensuring that program content is culturally accessible, further adjustments could be made. Tutors are an important source of insight into the delivery of HIPPY in culturally diverse communities and households and could assist in making further revisions.
- **Alumni networks:** It is clear that some tutors would like the opportunity for paid employment to be continuing. But this would contradict the logic of a *transitional* labour market. Additionally, coordinators suggest that some tutors would benefit from ongoing support. Creating an alumni network which could offer ongoing peer support and access to resources could address these concerns in part.
- **Further research:** While the study has found significant support for the transformative effect of working as a home tutor, and validates the theory of change, further research into the sustainability of these changes is warranted.

## Policy lessons

The HIPPY home tutors employment program is unusual in the Australian context, where both pre-employment and active labour market programs, including those for parents of young children, are increasingly coercive and highly conditional (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2019). By contrast, HIPPY is a voluntary program that works with parents' aspirations. The level of pride and joy indicated in the narratives certainly recommends this approach.

The HIPPY Tutors Study supports the conclusion that a labour market intervention that aims to improve the job-readiness of participants should work at multiple levels. It should develop social and human capital while building participants' esteem, resilience and aspirations—that is, their psychological capital. The development of the latter takes time and is filtered by relationships. Part of the reason that the tutor program is successful, particularly in building psychological capital, is that participants have an opportunity to experience their agency—that is, their capacity to make a difference—directly. This is not something that can occur in a classroom or via case management alone. Having the opportunity to make an active contribution to program delivery as part of a paid workforce is what makes it possible.

***Prior to HIPPY I had employment in a field I had outgrown and after having my second child I found that it wasn't as family friendly as I had hoped. I was lucky enough to become a HIPPY home tutor and since then I have not looked back.***

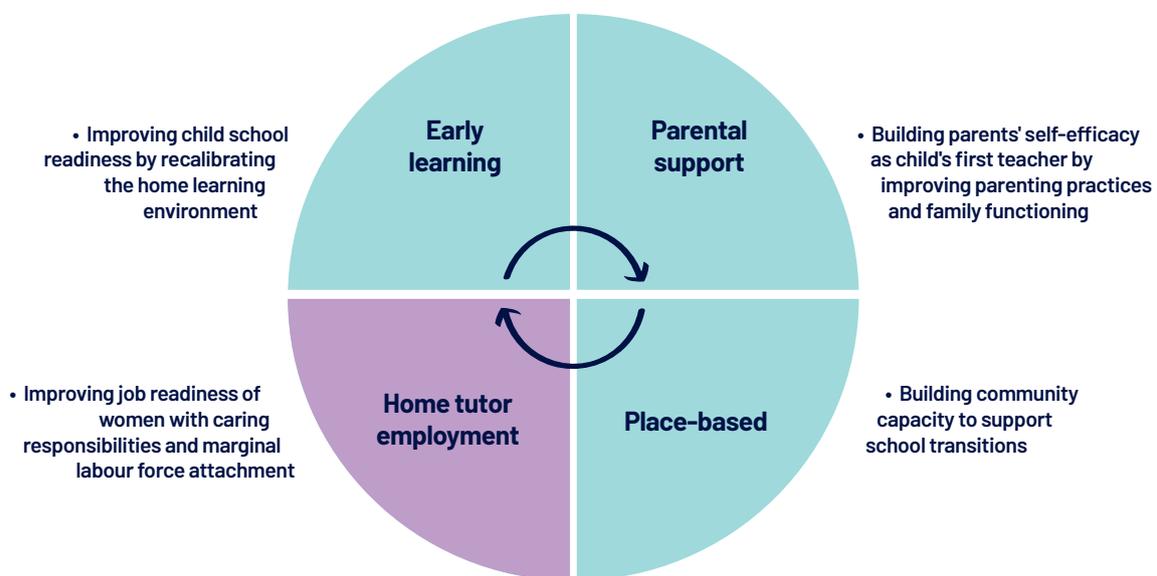
***HIPPY has taught me so many valuable things that I wish I had known earlier. It gave me the confidence to study in a new career path and also provided me with many opportunities to grow and learn about topics that I wouldn't have otherwise done.***

***I love the fact that working as a HIPPY home tutor enabled me to work on my social skills (meeting new people, going out of my comfort zone etc.) in my own way with the support of lots of people. The coordinators at my site were so supportive and always believed in me and I think that is very unique and important part of HIPPY.***

# 1 HIPPY's transitional labour market for home tutors

HIPPY is a complex intervention. The model has four components, including an integrated parenting support and pre-school learning program. HIPPY is also a place-based intervention with aspirations to build the capacity of the communities in which it is delivered to support school transitions. This study, however, has focused on the support provided to home tutors and their experience of working for HIPPY. The analysis confirms that this structured support warrants separate attention as a sub-program.

Figure 1 Four program components of the HIPPY Model



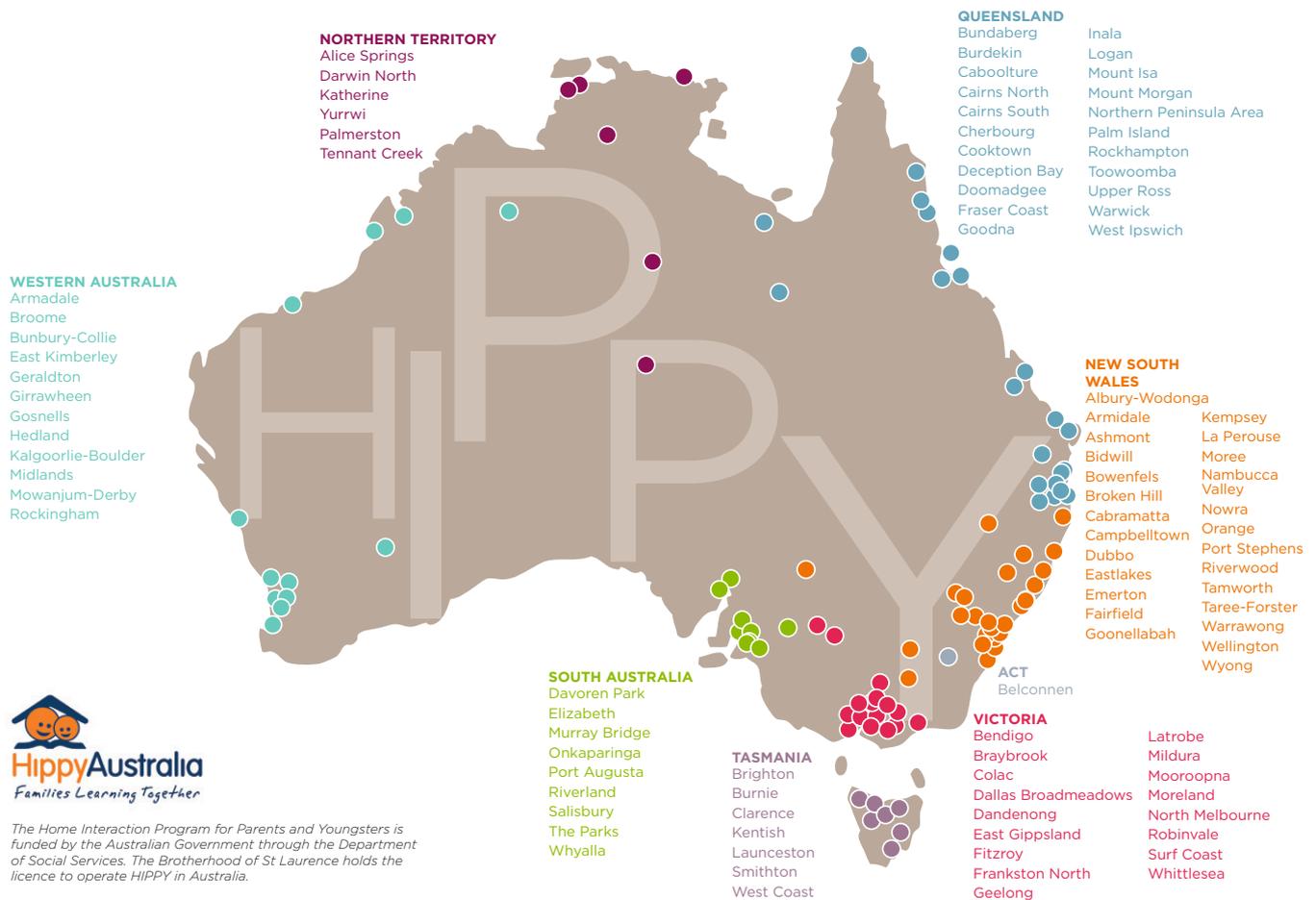
Until now, the employment of home tutors has been described as an 'essential feature' of the HIPPY model. This remains correct. But this first chapter analyses the structure of the sub-program with reference to the broader literature on labour market intervention and employment services. It finds that HIPPY creates a transitional labour market for tutors, who are provided with additional supports that are substantively personalised.

## HIPPY in Australia

HIPPY in Australia is part of a global network of home visiting programs which work with parents in communities facing multiple forms of disadvantage, encouraging them to understand and celebrate their role as their child's first teacher. Originally developed in Israel in the late 1960s to support parents from a migrant background to prepare their children for school (Goldstein 2017), HIPPY currently operates in 10 countries, with HIPPY-inspired programs in another four countries in the network<sup>1</sup>. Licensing arrangements are managed by HIPPY International.

<sup>1</sup> <http://hippy-international.org/where-hippy-is/>

**Figure 2 HIPPY locations in Australia**



The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Social Services. The Brotherhood of St Laurence holds the licence to operate HIPPY in Australia.

HIPPY was first trialed in Fitzroy by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) in 1998. It was subsequently funded by the Australian Government in 2008 and now operates in 100 sites across the country, with approximately 4500 families participating each year. The first 50 sites selected were communities with high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage; the final sites were also selected on the basis that they had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. HIPPY is currently funded under the Department of Social Services (DSS) Families and Children Activity which supports interventions to improve the wellbeing of children and the functioning of families, particularly those in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities.

The BSL continues to operate HIPPY Australia, as a national prime provider, in addition to managing three sites directly. In this prime-provider model, HIPPY Australia retains the exclusive international licence to deliver HIPPY and, on behalf of government, contracts with 64 local agencies, including 15 Aboriginal

Controlled Community Organisations (ACCO) to provide the program in the selected sites. HIPPY Australia promotes model fidelity, and is responsible for policy development, central administration and continuous improvement. HIPPY Australia also maintains a network of consultants that provide advice and support for individual sites.

## The structure of the learning intervention

### Learning activities and program delivery

Each year HIPPY sites recruit up to 30 new families with children aged four years to participate in a two-year intervention which concludes as the child completes the preparatory year of school. During the first year HIPPY operates across 30 weeks, through alternating home visits and group meetings. In the second year, the program operates for 15 weeks, following a similar structure. During the home visits, the tutors deliver HIPPY activity packs and role-

play learning activities with parents, who are then encouraged to undertake these with their children. Home tutors attend group meetings also.

### **Curriculum and pedagogy**

The HIPPY curriculum is aligned with Australia's Early Years Learning Framework, and learning activities incorporate HIPPY's distinctive pedagogical principles. Home tutors explain the importance of *everywhere learning* and the *3Cs* to participating families. Everywhere learning encourages parents to maximise opportunities for learning in everyday situations and thus to normalise and demystify learning for their children in their lived context. The *3Cs* strategy—correct, complete and confirm—is a simple technique to help adults to improve their child's learning, without resorting to negative feedback. When children do not give the correct response to a question, the parent avoids the use of 'no' which can be discouraging. Instead the parent gives the *correct* response and moves on to another question. When a child gives a partially correct response, the adult repeats the child's response and *completes* the correct response. When the child gives the correct response, the adult repeats the response and *confirms* that it is correct. Tutors also encourage parents to use *behaviour-specific* praise.

### **The structure of home tutor engagement and support**

At the beginning of each year, HIPPY sites also employ a small subset of participating parents as home tutors. Because these individuals, usually mothers, are taken from the same communities they face significant socioeconomic disadvantages, including marginalisation from the labour force. While the peer-to-peer approach is designed to increase the accessibility of the program for parents, HIPPY Australia has additional aspirations for the tutor program: to facilitate re-entry into the labour market for tutors by building labour market readiness and competitiveness.

#### **Tutor selection, training and supervision**

Tutors are recruited through a formal interview. If selected, they undertake 15 hours of pre-service training, usually spread over three days during school hours to accommodate caring responsibilities. These are also the hours they are likely to work when delivering HIPPY. Assuming that tutors work with 12 families, they work about 25½ hours a fortnight in the

first year and 30 hours in the second, when home visits are slightly longer.

Across the two years, employment is structured by continual learning and development. In the first year, tutors complete three hours of HIPPY-related training and half an hour of supervision each week. In the second year, the time allocated to training and supervision changes because there are fewer, but longer, home visits. There is an additional half an hour of supervision allocated to employment skill development each week. But tutors undertake three hours of training only in the alternate week.

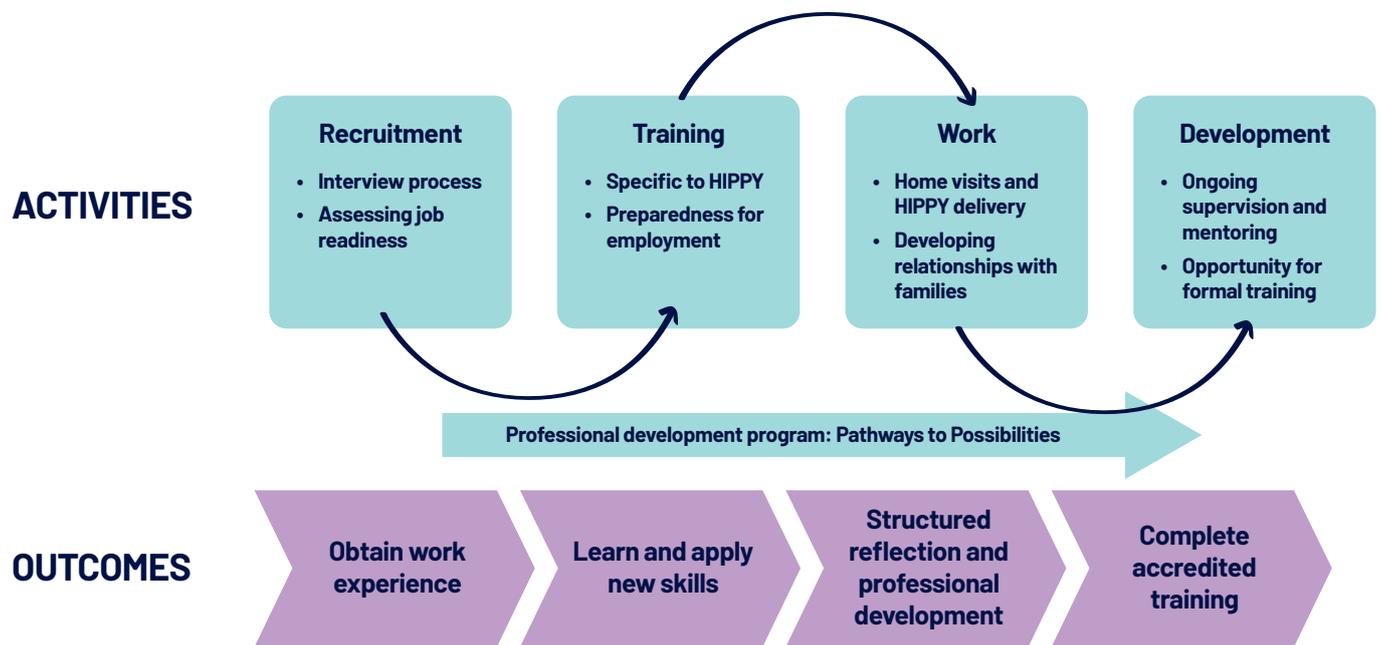
#### **Pathways to possibilities**

HIPPY tutors participate in the Pathways to Possibilities (P2P) program, which was specifically designed by HIPPY Australia to structure the coaching and mentoring provided to home tutors by site coordinators (HIPPY Australia 2019). Distinct from the training that prepares tutors to undertake home visits and deliver the integrated parental support and early learning program, P2P focuses on preparing tutors for future employment.

Each tutor develops a *working together statement*, which is countersigned by the site coordinator and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each. This is followed by a *pathway plan* which articulates goals and aspirations for the development of knowledge and skills in five identified domains: core HIPPY skills, self-development, learning, relationships and work. The plan is formally reviewed five times over the two years. HIPPY Australia has developed both documentation and tools to support this process. An online Learning Management System (LMS) contains specific modules on job-readiness skills—from looking for work to starting work—which can be completed as part of the P2P journey.

To advance tutors' aspirations and development, each HIPPY site receives \$8000 in tutor training funds each financial year. These are allocated to enable tutors to complete accredited training and other professional development activities. The overarching structure for the HIPPY Home Tutors Employment Program is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Structure of the HIPPY home tutors employment program



## Employment services in Australia

In Australia, employment services were introduced after the Second World War. The formation of the Commonwealth Employment Services (CES) followed the publication of the 1945 Chifley White Paper on full employment (Coombs 1994). By the 1990s, however, the political commitment to full employment had been retracted (Bennett et al. 2018). The current organising principle for employment services and allied labour market interventions is known as ‘activation’ (OECD 2015). Active labour market policies and programs (ALMPs) are based on two assumptions. First, that increasing and improving job-seeking and job-matching strategies will hasten obtaining employment. This is an intuitively plausible proposition when there is jobs growth, there are few impediments to labour market mobility and the skills of the workforce are aligned with the evolving requirements of industry, meaning that there is little structural unemployment. Second, that unemployed individuals will be motivated to accelerate their search activities because there are financial penalties attached to non-compliance. This means that for clients of employment services,

continued receipt of income support is conditional on undertaking agreed activities in a timely manner.

The continuum of employment programs is illustrated in Figure 4. Pre-employment programs work with individuals at key life-transition points, like leaving school or retuning to work after injury or childbirth. Post-employment interventions tend to couple mentoring with financial incentives, like tax credits, to sustain employment and increase working hours (Dorsett 2014; OECD 2019). These are less common in Australia.

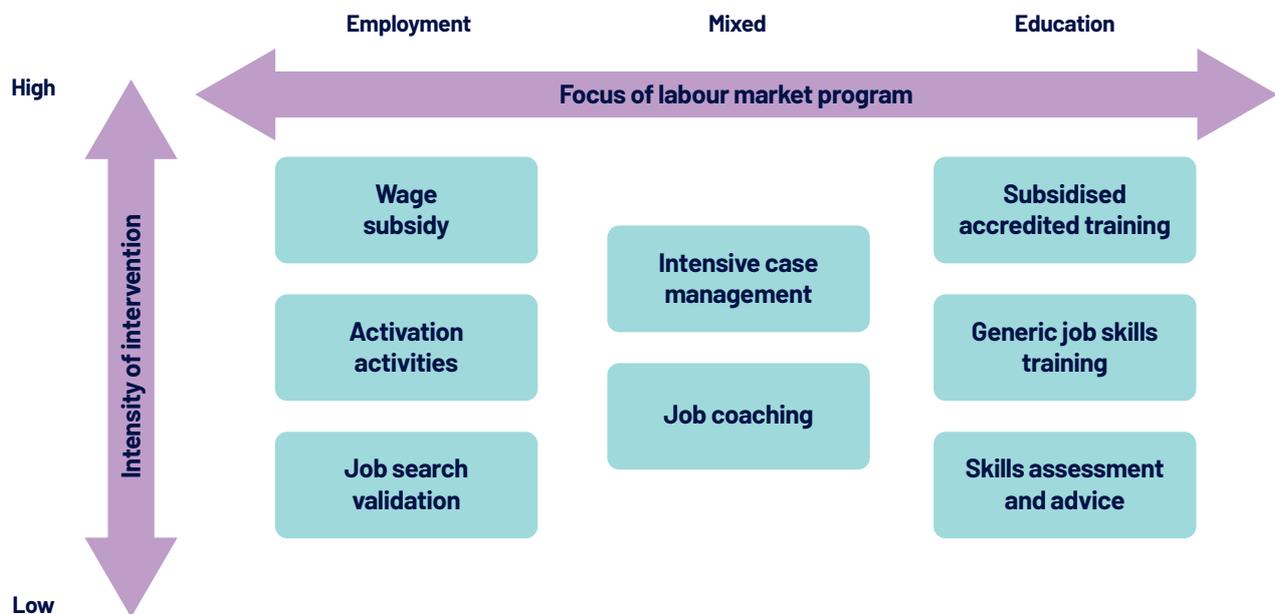
Within the middle category, activation, there are multiple kinds of programs. The map of employment services (Figure 5) is based on the international literature, differentiating between program types by level of intensity and the focus of support. In Australia, clients of jobactive, the major employment service program, are classified by labour market competitiveness and offer different services according to this classification and the length of unemployment<sup>2</sup>.

2 Prior BSL research with jobactive staff and clients suggests that the classification system is of limited utility in designing an effective, individualised response for unemployed people seeking employment. See for example Randrianarisoa & Bowman (2018).

Figure 4 Continuum of employment services



Figure 5 Classification of employment services



## HIPPY's transitional labour market

The support that HIPPY provides to home tutors shares some characteristics of a pre-employment program, with its emphasis on job-readiness. While the forms of professional coaching and mentoring offered to tutors, including the opportunity to undertake subsidised accredited training, are also found in some employment services, HIPPY does not share the key activation characteristics of ALMPs. The support for tutors is focused instead on building aspirations. For these reasons we looked for an alternative theoretical construct that could more accurately describe the home tutor program.

TLMs were first theorised by Günter Schmid (1998). In one sense the term designates the kinds of labour markets that emerge for individuals at key life-transition points, when employment contracts allow individuals to balance non-labour market yet productive activities, including studying and caring, with paid employment. Schmid was cognisant that under certain conditions TLMs could function to entrench social exclusion; however, this is not meant to be a description of the gig economy. For Schmid the distinguishing feature of TLMs is that they encourage 'mobility at the border of social systems', work and family for example (Schmid 1998, p. 6). He argued that if properly institutionalised, TLMs would be an effective solution to structural unemployment in slow-growing economies.

The structure of support for HIPPY home tutors fits the description of TLMs for three reasons. First, it is paid work: tutors are remunerated for program delivery. Second, employment is flexibly organised, acknowledging tutors' caring responsibilities. Third, access to continued learning and upgrading skills encourages transition into ongoing labour market participation.

## The HIPPY Tutors Study

Despite the fact that HIPPY has been subject to extensive research and evaluation both in Australia and internationally, (see ACIL Allen Consulting 2018; Liddell et al. 2011; Goldstein 2017) the experiences of HIPPY tutors have not been studied extensively. The HIPPY Tutors Study looks to remedy this gap. This report examines the operation of the transitional labour market constructed by the HIPPY home tutor program, largely through the narratives of tutors and site coordinators.

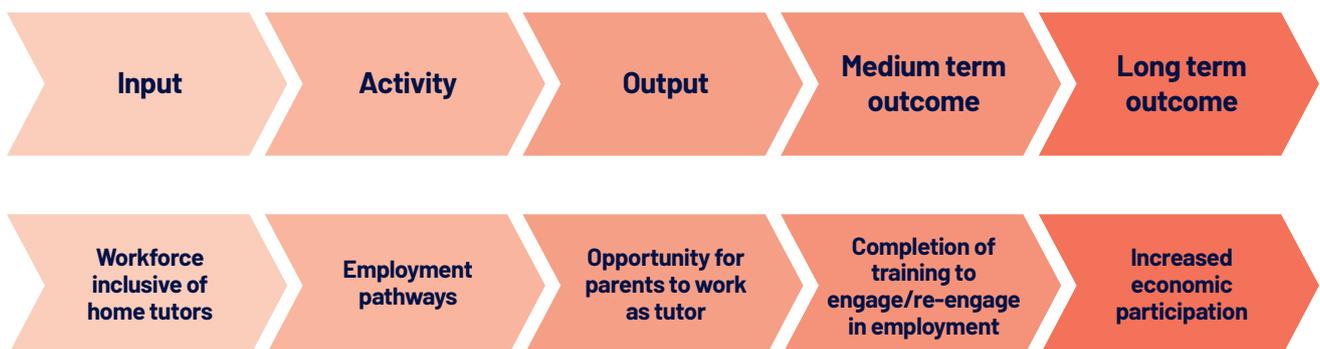
## 2 Developing a theory of change for the HIPPY home tutors program

The development and validation of a theory of change for the HIPPY home tutors employment program is a central contribution of this study. In their recent evaluation of HIPPY, ACIL Allen produced a program logic that included the HIPPY tutor support component, reproduced in modified form below (Figure 6). The purpose of this chapter, however, is to articulate the causal mechanisms that are activated by program delivery, which thereby justifies the inclusion and sequence of program activities described in a program logic: this is the work of a theory of change.

Theories of change are particularly useful in the kind of developmental-evaluative research undertaken by the HIPPY Tutors Study. An evaluability assessment functions to ascertain whether the program logic has been implemented with fidelity, and whether processes, documentation and data collection are in good enough order to facilitate further review. An outcomes evaluation often measures the achievement of program effects, both intended and otherwise. As a developmental evaluation, however, the HIPPY Tutors Study serves a slightly different purpose: to understand why the program works and to gather evidence that it does indeed activate the theorised mechanism of change. This kind of analysis is useful for operating at scale and replicating the model. For both it is important, but insufficient, to know that the model works. Scaling and/or replicating a successful model requires understanding the mechanisms through which it operates.

In this chapter, we have reviewed the evidence about the labour market trajectories of women with young children. First, we explore why some women are at a particular disadvantage when attempting to re-engage with the labour market. The reasons are many and can be categorised as supply-side factors (characteristics of individuals), demand-side factors (characteristics of the labour market) and policy factors. Because the HIPPY tutor program is concerned with the supply side of this model, the second part of the following discussion reviews the relevant literature for frameworks that explain how to overcome supply-side deficits. Our analysis points to the importance of developing three forms of capital—human, social and psychological—which form the foundation for the theory of change for HIPPY’s home tutor support program.

Figure 6 Extract from the ACIL Allen program logic relevant to the HIPPY tutor support program



## Mothers at risk of social exclusion

Having children and returning to work thereafter are two major transition points that can disrupt career trajectories and thus financial wellbeing for women. Australia's female labour force participation ranks in the lowest third of OECD nations (OECD 2017, p. 22). Although maternal employment has consistently increased over the past four decades (Baxter 2013a), there remains an employment gap of around 25 points for women with children under 5 years and for lone mothers with children under 15 years (OECD 2017, p. 13). This trend of lower participation for women with significant caring responsibilities entails a risk of economic marginalisation.

For women at a disadvantage in the labour market, less successful transitions can precipitate long-term reliance on welfare, and social exclusion. Actuarial research commissioned by DSS estimated that on what were then current trends, in 2024–25, 48% of those receiving parenting payments in 2014–15 will still be receiving income support payments and only 22% will have left the welfare system. The ongoing level of reliance estimated is markedly higher for young parents, aged under 18 years at the birth of their first child. The analysis concluded that those currently receiving parenting payments 'have the highest future lifetime cost of all payment groups at \$441,000 per person' (Department of Social Services 2016).

As with all groups that face either long-term or structural unemployment, these statistics suggest not only a cost to government, but also a loss to macroeconomic performance, due to the failure to productively engage available human capital (Chapman & Kapuscinski 2000). As well, this poses a challenge for social equity, given those in receipt of income support are much more likely to experience poverty (Davidson et al. 2018). The HIPPY home tutor employment program constitutes a rejoinder to this set of issues, by working to minimise the risk that women with young children who live in communities with high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage and who have been marginalised from the workforce, will remain excluded from the labour market.

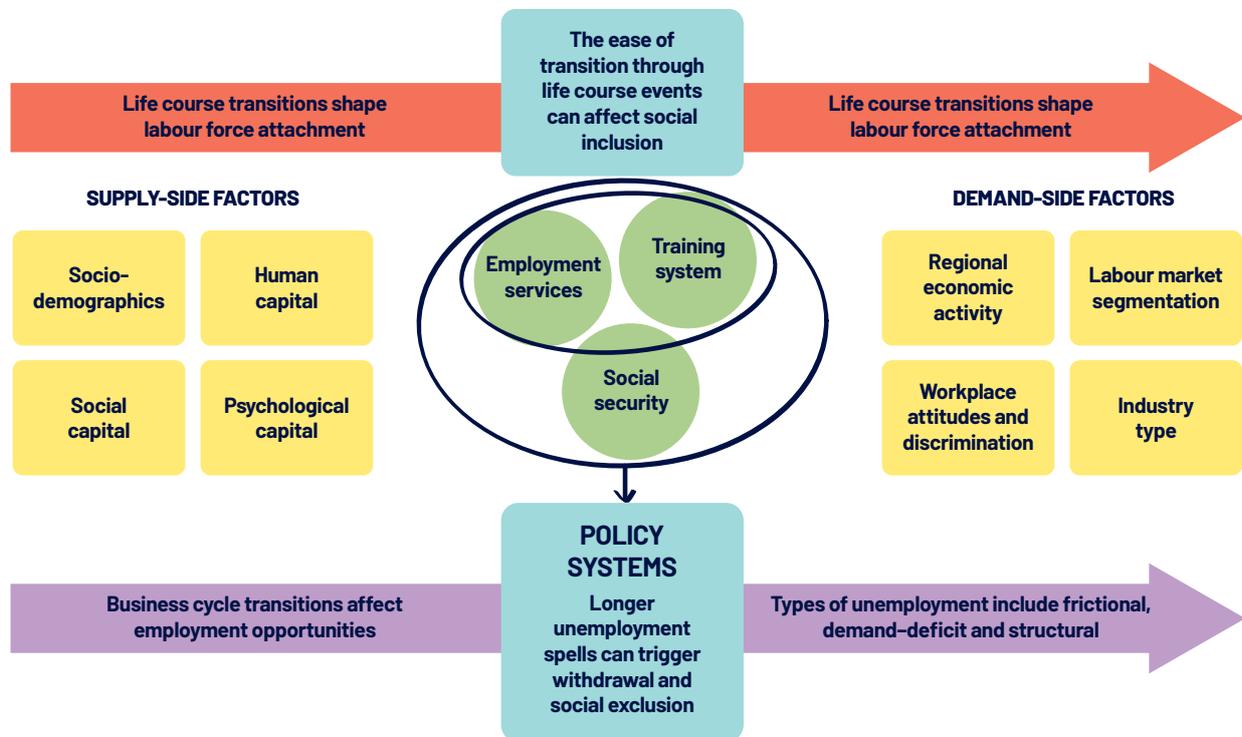
## Factors that influence levels of maternal labour force attachment

Figure 7 summarises the working model we have used to understand labour force attachment and participation. Both the characteristics of individuals, who supply the labour and the characteristics of the labour market, including the level of demand for labour, are relevant. So too, are the policy systems which mediate the supply of labour and can filter the implications of demand fluctuations, cushioning the financial impact of unemployment for example. A more complex model might also consider the policy systems that create demand for employment, regulate industrial relations and thereby labour market behaviours. However, Figure 7 is sufficient for our purpose, which is to develop a theory of change for the HIPPY home tutor support program.

This working model distinguishes between bouts of labour market inactivity, which can occur at multiple points in the life cycle, and several forms of unemployment, which are differentiated according to level and demand for types of labour. Spells of frictional unemployment occur as individuals move between jobs whether or not separation was voluntary. Demand-deficit unemployment occurs when there is contraction of economic activity which can be regionally specific. Structural unemployment, which can be longer term, occurs when there is a further mismatch between available human capital and employment opportunities, with implications for the labour market competitiveness of particular groups of people.

In this study we are mostly interested in understanding the supply-side factors that influence women's labour market trajectories. In 2013, Jennifer Baxter published two studies of maternal labour force participation in Australia, based on the first ten waves of the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey and the first four waves of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) (Baxter 2013a, 2013b). The data allowed Baxter to identify levels of maternal employment in two representative samples and to correlate this with a range of characteristics. Additionally, she analysed maternal employment transitions over time. Together these analyses confirm that a variety of factors, usefully categorised as belonging to socio-demographic characteristics, levels of human capital and types of social capital, operate in Australia at statistically significant levels. Given that Baxter's analysis refers to data aggregated in the first decade

**Figure 7 Working model of the interactions between supply-side, demand-side and policy factors that explain labour market trajectories**



of the twenty-first century, during which maternal employment increased substantially (Parr 2012), trend analysis, rather than statistical analysis, is reported below.

- **Sociodemographics** is a broad category that includes age, relationship status and family size, country of birth, ethnicity, indigeneity, English language proficiency, health and wellbeing status, housing tenure and location. All these factors have an impact on a mother's levels of labour market participation. Poorer health status, lower levels of English language proficiency and having an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background predict lower rates of employment; so too being a lone parent, having a large family and having young children.
- **Levels of human capital** are largely assessed by education attainment and work experience. Lower levels of education predict low levels of employment for mothers with young children. Mothers with more recent employment history tend to have higher levels of education. Recent employment history also predicts stronger labour force attachment and longer hours for mothers.

- **Social capital** is a broad category that can be divided into *bonding* or lateral forms of social relationships and *bridging* forms of capital that provide access to networks and relationships that can promote social mobility. Baxter (2013a) found that mothers who reported difficulties with practical social support had spent less time in employment in the previous year. Lone mothers were more likely to have difficulties with access to social support.

Although Baxter did not undertake multivariate analyses, undoubtedly such factors interact and coalesce to produce more entrenched forms of labour market disadvantage. Additionally, her analysis revealed some evidence that there are attitudinal differences between women, with those working longer hours more likely to hold beliefs that support combining parenting with working, and to experience higher levels of personal agency (Baxter 2013a, p. 15). Baxter suggests that women who lack attitudes that support combining parenting and working and a sense of personal agency may be deterred from working. Indeed, personal attitudes and self-efficacy may play a role in explaining women's labour market behaviours.

The attitudinal factors to which Baxter refers have been discussed in greater detail in the theoretical literature and qualitative research. Life-course or transitions theory argues that significant alterations to our roles and identities occur at key life transitions (MacMillan & Copher 2005). Theorists in this tradition argue that such reconfigurations reflect both individual preference formation and the influence of broader social structures; their approach is thus dynamic and descriptive. However, they also argue that more or less successful transitions can become trajectories to greater or lesser social inclusion. This insight is of particular relevance to understanding HIPPY's purpose. The intervention takes place at a point of transition—for both parent and child as primary school commences—to create a new trajectory towards greater inclusion for both parent and child.

There is a growing literature on the *identity work* that women undertake to balance core and peripheral, personal and social components of identity in the return to work after having had a child (Jennings 2004; Holland & Thomson 2009; McArthur & Winkworth 2013, Bataille 2015). Research shows women's sense of self evolves across this transition as they attempt to consolidate their maternal self with their professional identity. This is a process of exploration, adaptation and finally expression (Bataille 2015). As mothers re-enter the workforce, their experience can also create conflict. (Ladge & Greenberg 2015).

Integrating the demands of motherhood with employment responsibilities can be challenging and may trigger concerns about not fulfilling obligations as mothers or meeting professional expectations adequately. Inflexible jobs, long work hours or jobs that lack security and autonomy can exacerbate this work-to-family conflict. The extent to which work positively or negatively influences home and vice versa varies with stages of motherhood. Negative spillover is more likely in the primary years of motherhood, causing parental stress and dissatisfaction that affect mothers' self-perceptions (Lin & Burgard 2018). When identity issues and work-family conflict cannot be resolved through suitable employment and caring arrangements, women may opt to leave the workforce. This can involve significant personal and financial costs (Kanji & Cahusac 2015).

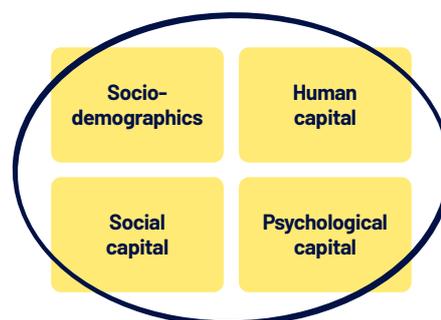
## Strengthening supply-side factors

The literature discussed above confirms the fourfold typology of supply-side factors that influence maternal employment in our working model, extract reproduced below.

Understanding which sociodemographic characteristics predict lower rates of employment and fewer working hours helps us identify risk factors and target interventions; relevant variables are further discussed with the study's sample in Chapter 3.

The other categories—the forms of human, social and psychological capital—are potential arenas for intervention, to improve labour market competitiveness. While both human capital and social capital are well understood categories, psychological capital is a more recent construct, and even its proponents are concerned about the analytic utility of the proliferation of types of capital (Youssef-Morgan 2014). Nonetheless, there is an increasing number of studies demonstrating its conceptual validity and practical utility (Chen & Lim 2012; Lizar et al. 2015; Luthans et al. 2006; Matt et al. 2006).

**Figure 8 Influences on maternal employment: supply-side factors**



If human capital is about what you know and social capital is about who you know, psychological capital is more about self-knowledge (Luthans et al. 2006). The construct consists of four attributes:

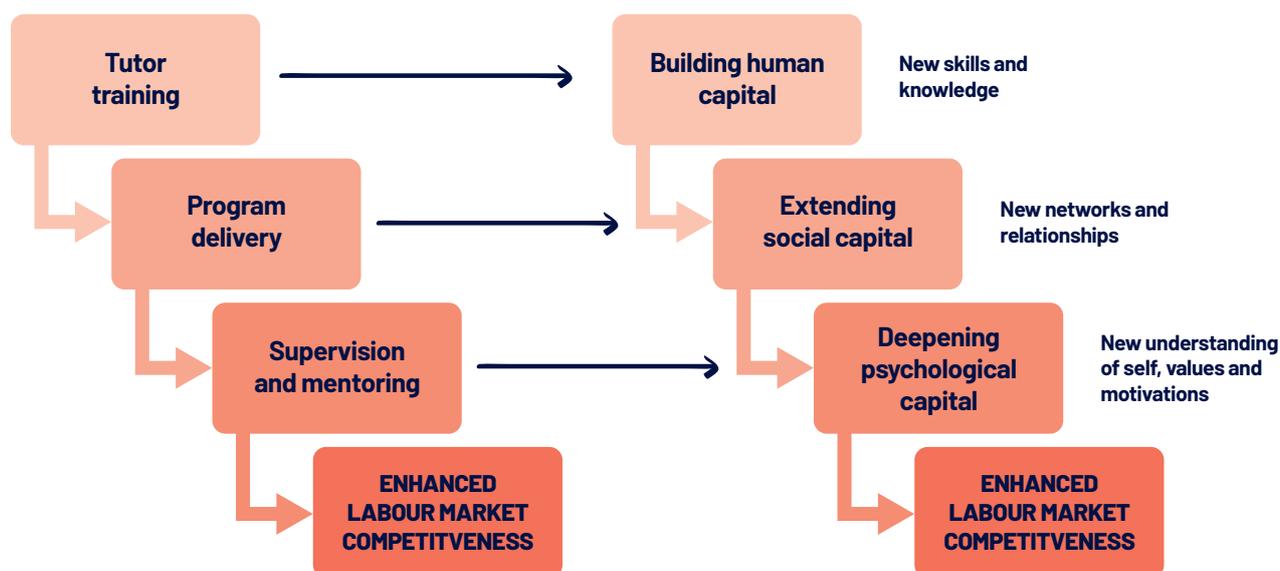
- self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's domain-specific confidence that they can competently execute relevant tasks
- realistic and flexible optimism, which refers to an attributional or reasoning style that allows individuals to believe that future success is possible
- hope, which means that individuals assume agency with respect to life's choices, and take action
- resilience, which involves a specific capacity to respond efficaciously to adversity and persevere in the face of challenges.

Developed by organisational psychologists, the theory behind psychological capital, or PsyCap, is indebted to Alberta Bandura's socio-cognitive theory of human development and Martin Seligman's account of positive psychology (Bandura & Locke 2003). Luthans (2006) argues that each attribute is a psychological state, not a trait, which can be developed. Although each can be measured separately, in an organisational or employment context the attributes work together to provide individuals with psychological capital which can be deployed to their advantage.

Fundamental, if implicit, to the rationale behind the HIPPY home tutors support program is the assumption that building or enhancing the tutors' human, social and psychological capital will increase their aspirations to gain paid employment and their labour market competitiveness. This assumption is also the foundation of the theory of change: that the training and work experience in program delivery, coupled with structured professional development, coaching and mentoring, will enhance tutors' human, social and psychological capital to ensure that they are job-ready, both capable and motivated.

The theory of change is illustrated in Figure 9. Discrete program activities can be correlated with the development of each form of capital: (1) training increases human capital, (2) program delivery facilitates the extension of social capital and (3) mentoring and coaching deepens psychological capital. Although additive, the interaction of components is not straight-forwardly linear. Indeed, each component is likely to be mutually reinforcing. The overarching model—a transitional labour market, characterised by flexibility—provides context and structure for the theory of change.

**Figure 9 The HIPPY home tutor support program logic and theory of change**



# 3 Curating narratives through collaborative interpretation

HIPPY has been extensively researched internationally (Goldstein 2017), and is internationally recognised as an effective intervention leading to improvements in children’s cognitive development (Mathematica 2019). The implementation of HIPPY in Australia has been accompanied by a comprehensive research program led by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and recently summarised in the report on the HIPPY Longitudinal Study (HLS). The HLS also concluded that HIPPY works to build the capability of parents, transform the home learning environment and accelerate child cognitive development.

As previously noted, there has been very little research into the experience of HIPPY tutors. Although there have been multiple analyses of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the home visits, which are undertaken by home tutors (see also Liddell et al. 2011). The HLS measured parents’ comfort with home visiting, with approximately 80% indicating that they were either comfortable or very comfortable with home visits at the ends of the first and second years of the program, Waves 2 and 3 of data collection (n=569, n=441).

This finding, combined with evidence that HIPPY has a significant and positive impact on the cognitive development of participating children, suggests that home visits are a useful delivery mode which supports parents to transform the home learning environment in ways that are consistent with HIPPY’s distinctive pedagogical approach. Validating the model in this way implicitly finds that home tutors are effective at their work and that peer delivery is justified. Nonetheless, whether HIPPY enhances the labour market competitiveness of home tutors has not been analysed. This world-first study looks to remedy this gap.

**Figure 10** Level of comfort with home visiting



# Design and methodology

## The objectives of the HIPPY Tutors Study

The research project had three objectives:

- 1 To hear directly from home tutors and site coordinators about their experience, which informed the methodological choices made
- 2 To identify whether and how the components of the program increased the job-readiness and labour market competitiveness of home tutors
- 3 To consider any implications for the design of employment services in Australia, given the Commonwealth's dual objectives to increase labour force participation among women with children and to reduce welfare dependence among disadvantaged jobseekers in this cohort.

The research included a comprehensive literature review of the evidence about maternal employment trajectories in Australia and the associated explanatory frameworks, the history of and evidence for different labour market interventions and Australian policy responses, as presented in Chapter 2. The project, however, also involved data collection. To maximise the participation of tutors and site coordinators and obtain evidence about their lived experience of the program, the project used innovative research software called SenseMaker, developed by Cognitive Edge<sup>3</sup>.

## About SenseMaker

SenseMaker is an online narrative collection tool<sup>4</sup>. It begins with a prompt question about a specific, lived experience on the topic of inquiry to elicit an anecdote. This can be written or recorded; in some examples people submit images or even poems. For the HIPPY Tutors Study, respondents provided their narrative in writing.

The rationale behind asking participants to describe a lived experience is to avoid the *evaluative* bias in opinion-based statements. The prompting question for home tutors was:

***You are with a group of friends welcoming a new neighbour. The conversation turns to the best and worst experiences you have had as a HIPPY tutor, what experience would you share?***

Site coordinators were asked:

***You are with a group of friends welcoming a new neighbour. The conversation turns to the best and worst experiences you have had supporting or training a HIPPY tutor, what experience would you share?***

Once they have offered their narrative, respondents are guided through a series of questions in the form of interactive dyads and triads, before completing a demographic questionnaire and other general research questions in a standard survey format.

The dyads and triads are unique to SenseMaker. These are used to encourage respondents to reflect more deeply on what matters to them in the experience (Cooke & Iredale 2019). This process is called 'self-signifying'. It permits the respondent to *make sense* of their experience, prior to other forms of analysis. Together the dyads and triads form a signification framework that guides subsequent interpretation (Sardone & Wong 2010).

Dyads ask respondents to rate their experience on a scale of too little to too much. The HIPPY tutors' SenseMaker contained two dyads that asked respondents about the complexity of the challenges that they faced and the level of support they received. Triads ask respondents to consider their reported experience with reference to a concept that is internally complex and thus has different elements which may be more or less relevant. Each option is located on one corner of a triangle. Participants move a dot within the triangle to suggest a balance that reflects their experience, or if not relevant to the narrative shared, select not applicable. The HIPPY tutors' SenseMaker included a series of triads that probed the factors that may assist or inhibit the performance of the person's role, and the relevance of culture to the experience.

The SenseMaker Analyst software aggregates the responses along the dyads and within the triads, displaying these visually (Lynam & Fletcher 2015). The visual arrangement of the data is linked to individual narratives, which can be viewed simultaneously by highlighting the relevant portion of the dyad or triad. This allows analysts to consider whether there are any themes in the narratives that correspond to the placement of responses within the triads or along the dyads (see Appendix for an example that was designed for the SenseMaking workshops). The aggregated

<sup>3</sup> See <https://cognitive-edge.com/>

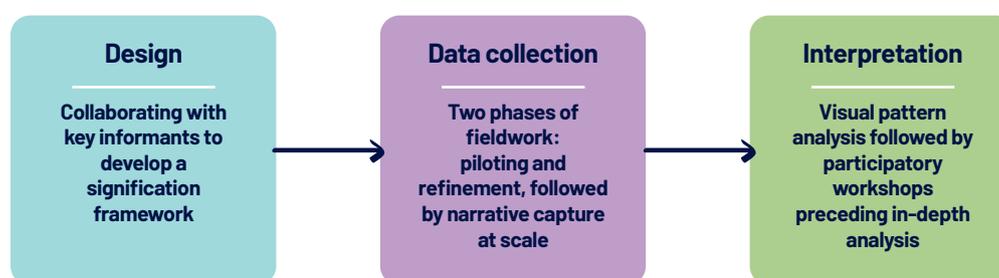
<sup>4</sup> Some technical terms of the tool are explained in the Glossary

dyads and triads can be colour-coded and filtered using the demographic characteristics of respondents and/or their answers to any other general research question(s). This analysis is the first step after data collection and precedes both SenseMaker workshops and any narrative analysis.

## Project methodology

The process of undertaking a SenseMaker study is threefold: design, data collection and interpretation, which are summarised in Figure 11.

**Figure 11 SenseMaker research process**



The specific process undertaken by the HIPPY Tutors Study is shown in Table 1:

**Table 1 HIPPY Tutors Study methodology**

Stage	Details
Collaborative design	In February 2019, a group of peer tutors, site coordinators and HIPPY Australia staff participated in a workshop in Melbourne to help create the signification framework to be used in the study.
Testing and refining	The insights from the initial workshop were used to design the two SenseMaker tools used: one for home tutors and one for site coordinators. The tools were piloted at four sites. After discussions with tutors at these sites the coordinators gave feedback using a structured questionnaire. Adjustments were made accordingly.
Ethics approval	Ethics approval was granted by the BSL Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 6 May 2019. Approval was contingent on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>digital security—all data collected by the SenseMaker tool was stored in a secure database in encrypted digital format.</li> <li>consent procedures—at the beginning of the survey, respondents were required to indicate consent via the SenseMaker tool and could not continue to explore the tool without indicating consent.</li> <li>confidentiality—respondents also had the option to withhold their response from inclusion in publications based on the study. Of the 212 tutor respondents, 63 chose to withhold their narrative. These 63 narratives were analysed separately by researchers to identify whether there were specific themes or experiences recorded that were not present in the remainder and no distinctive patterns were noted.</li> <li>anonymity—respondents provided demographic data but no identifying information and were instructed to make sure that narratives did not contain the names of people or places.</li> </ul>

Stage	Details
Data collection	Data collection took place over three weeks in June 2019. Coordinators scheduled time during regular tutor training sessions as part of their fortnightly 'enrichment topic'. Coordinators were available to assist with any questions. An in-house instructional video was distributed to facilitate this, and HIPPY consultants provided further support.
Pattern identification	Initial analysis involved generating and identifying patterns using the SenseMaker Analyst software. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the cohort using pivot tables based on the multiple-choice questions</li> <li>• detecting and generating initial patterns for each signifier question (triads and dyads) using filters from the multiple-choice questions (e.g. age, gender)</li> <li>• comparing participants' responses to signifier questions against the narratives.</li> </ul>
Collective interpretation	In August 2019 two workshops were held in Brisbane and Melbourne. Tutors and coordinators, from a mix of regional and urban sites participated in each workshop along with staff from HIPPY Australia. The Brisbane workshop included tutors from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and the Melbourne workshop included tutors from CALD backgrounds. <p>Workshop participants were presented with examples of dyads and triads, example narratives and a thematic summary of withheld narratives, and were invited to participate in three activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Analysing behaviours:</b> Participants were asked to read the narratives displayed around the room and list evident behaviours. These behaviours were then clustered into themes by small groups, which occasioned a discussion about what was implicit in the narratives from the perspective of the workshop participants.</li> <li>• <b>Analysing triads and dyads:</b> Participants were then asked to review the visual patterns and compile questions, comments and observations about what did and did not make sense about these from their perspective. Further discussion ensued.</li> <li>• <b>From insights to action:</b> Finally, participants were asked to reflect whether action could be taken in response to any identified issues.</li> </ul>
In-depth analysis	The research team coded both tutor and coordinator narratives using a grounded theory approach. This analysis was triangulated with the pattern analysis and the outcomes of the workshops to finalise the interpretation.

## Strengths and limitations

### Advantages of the SenseMaker approach

Conducting a time-limited research project in 100 sites across the Australian mainland and in Tasmania is logistically challenging. Collecting data online through SenseMaker provided a cost-effective solution to maximising the number of respondents. However, this was not the only reason the approach was selected. SenseMaker provides a platform for mixed methods research, which also enables stakeholder participation in both the design of the signification framework and the interpretation of the results. This approach has certain advantages:

- The validity of the signification framework relies on combining stakeholder views, in this instance obtained through an initial workshop and piloting phase, with program theory and published research,

all of which informs the design of the triads and dyads.

- The tool allows respondents to choose an experience that is significant to them. Anonymously recoding such experiences against the signification framework can minimise the response biases activated by traditional opinion-based surveys.
- The reliability of responses can be gauged by examining whether individuals varied their responses to the triads in particular. For example, a consistent pattern, dragging the ball to the same spot each time, could suggest an inattentive or inauthentic response, much like choosing the same response on a Likert scale for each question.
- SenseMaker supports integration with traditional forms of research. Given the narrow focus of this study, however, a sampling frame was not developed.

## Departures from traditional research practices

In another departure from traditional methods, research using SenseMaker does not aim for generalisability. Instead the purpose is to generate insights, derived from experience, that can prompt action. In this regard, the approach is indebted to complex systems theory, according to which causality in complex systems is not straightforward, or necessarily linear. Nonetheless, retrospective coherence and causal inference are possible, meaning that we are still able to make sense of the past. But multiple factors influence outcomes (Page, 2010). For this reason, interpretation requires granular attention to diversity and emergent themes which SenseMaker is designed to enable. In the HIPPY Tutors Study the recurrence of certain themes certainly suggests the centrality of key experiences; but the range of responses to the triads and dyads also suggests considerable diversity in the experience of tutors.

## The absence of a comparator group

The study did not involve a comparator group, which could otherwise serve to address the *null hypothesis* (that any observed changes in tutors might have happened anyway). This is always possible. But the narratives shared relate directly to experience of HIPPY. It is reasonable to assume that these accounts are authentic, and the program had an impact on participants in the ways described by them.

Most tutors are simultaneously undertaking HIPPY with their children. We are mindful that tutors' responses are likely to reflect the dual experience of being both a home tutor and a participating parent. The inclusion of site coordinators also helps to contextualise the reports of tutors, with additional management insight into the delivery of mentoring and professional development support.

## Developmental not outcomes evaluation

As already indicated, the study interrogates the lived experience of working as a tutor to understand how the model operates, and the impact on tutors during their period of employment. This means that the study does not provide evidence of the longer term outcomes of the program, but provides a foundation from which to undertake this research.

## Interpretive strategies

The SenseMaker process results in multiple types of data: narratives and visual patterns, demographic data and descriptive statistics from general research questions, along with workshop outcomes. We were thus able to triangulate the findings and incorporate multiple perspectives. The literature canvassing women's transitions back into employment after having children was used to deepen our understanding of the findings. We note, however, that more analysis has been undertaken of women in professional and managerial jobs than those facing labour market disadvantage.

Despite the departures from traditional forms of evaluation, satisfaction and opinion research, we are confident that the approach undertaken in the HIPPY Tutors Study was sufficiently robust to justify the conclusions reached. In fact, given the dearth of qualitative research into the employment transition experiences of young mothers in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, this research is an important and original contribution that extends the evidence base.

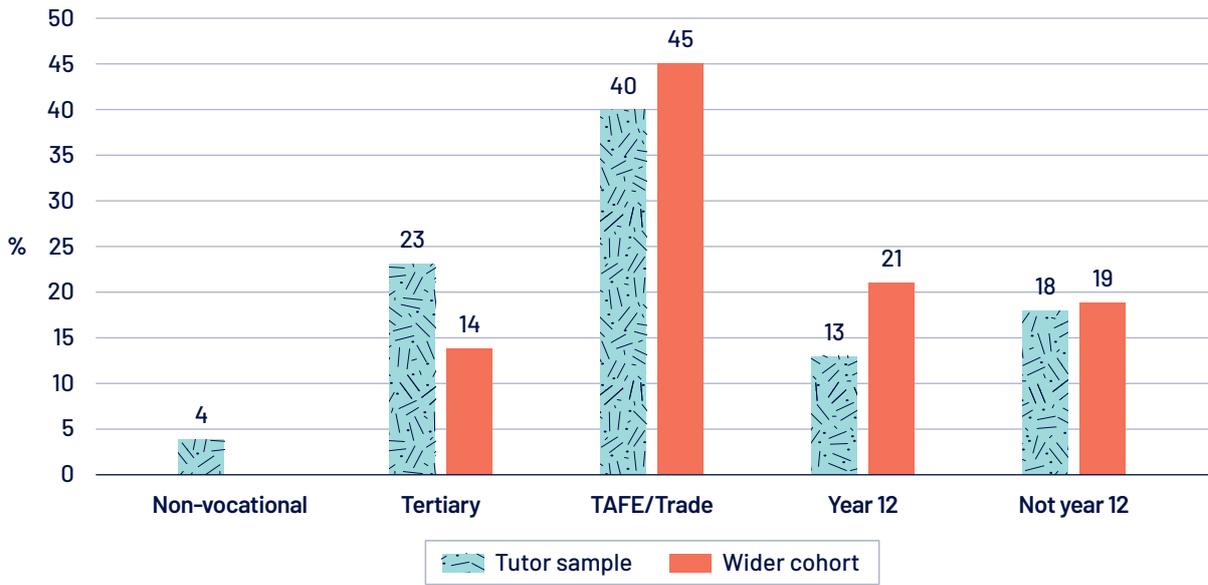
## HIPPY Tutors Study sample

The respondents who completed the tutors SenseMaker comprised nearly half the 412 individuals currently employed as tutors: there were 212 responses, including 17 from former tutors.

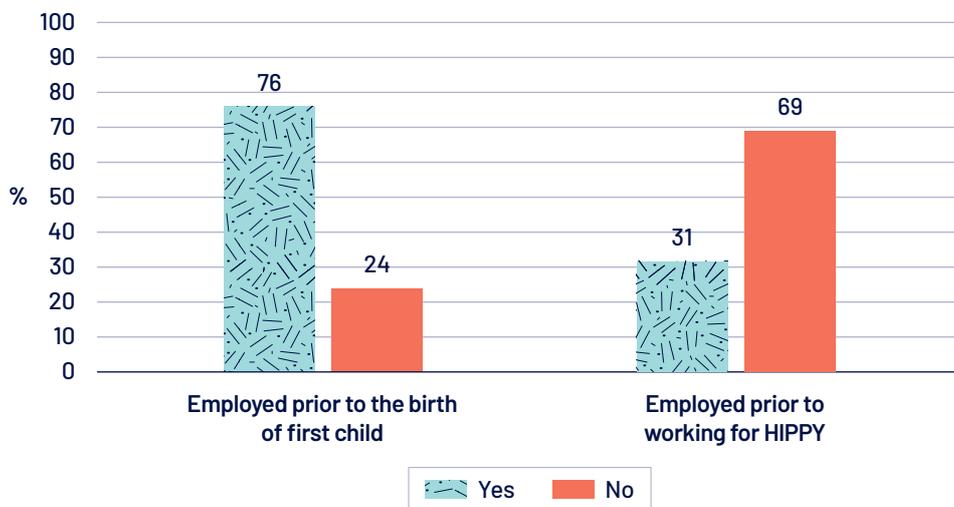
- The vast majority (99%) of respondents were female, which is consistent with gender composition of the tutor cohort.
- Some 30% of respondents were born overseas and over two-thirds of these came from a non-English speaking country. For context, 27% of all HIPPY tutors were born overseas.
- Among respondents, 15% identified as Aboriginal and 2.4% as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; among all tutors, 23% identify as Aboriginal or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, indicating a lower response rate among this group.
- Almost half (45%) of respondents had their participating child in their 20s, including 22% who had their child before turning 25.
- Some 16% of respondents had one child, 47% had two children and the remaining 37% had more than two children.

- The majority of tutor respondents lived with a partner, but 26% were sole parents.
- The most common qualification level, at 40% of the sample, was a TAFE or trade certificate; 23% had a tertiary qualification 13% had completed year 12 and 18% had not completed school (Figure 12).
- Regional or remote Australia was home for 60% of respondents.
- Most HIPPY tutors had been in employment before the birth of their first child; however, only 30% had been employed immediately prior to working for HIPPY.

**Figure 12 HIPPY tutor qualifications**



**Figure 13 HIPPY tutor recent employment experience**



## Interpreting the sample

The sample of tutors differs from the broader Australian population of similarly aged women in four important ways.

- 1 There are many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, who make up 17% of the sample but only 4% of Australian women in the relevant age range.
- 2 Tutors were also less qualified than women in the broader Australian population. Some 45% of Australian women have a tertiary qualification (WGEA 2020), compared with only 23% of the tutors in our sample. Only 14% of the entire cohort of HIPPY tutors employed in 2019 had a tertiary qualification.
- 3 The percentage of tutors who are lone parents is nine points higher than the percentage of sole parent-headed households in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019).
- 4 When recruited by HIPPY, the tutors in the sample were half as likely to be employed as Australian women with children under five years of age (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018).

The HIPPY Longitudinal Study sample confirmed that participating parents experience high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage on multiple criteria, pertaining to income support, financial distress and unemployment. This is not surprising: HIPPY sites were chosen on this basis. The HLS found that two-thirds of families lived in poverty; the remainder had incomes below full-time adult average weekly earnings.

Tutors participating in the sample are not only likely to experience higher levels of financial disadvantage than most Australian women with young children; they also clearly have lower levels of human capital, if measured by qualifications and work experience. It is likely that their level of social capital is also diminished. In light of the discussion in the previous chapter, which presented evidence that mothers of young children with low levels of human and social capital were at a disadvantage in the labour market, we can conclude that this is the case for HIPPY home tutors.

## Site coordinator characteristics

The respondent group had characteristics similar to the broader cohort.

- Almost all (97%) of respondents identified as female.
- Some 20% identified as Aboriginal, which is slightly less than the complete cohort of site coordinators.
- Of the coordinators who responded, 18% were born overseas, half of these in mainly English-speaking countries. Again, this is similar to the wider cohort, 16% of whom were born overseas.
- Regional and remote Australia was home for 50% of coordinators.

# 4 Personal transformation through professional development

The following analysis is presented in three parts:

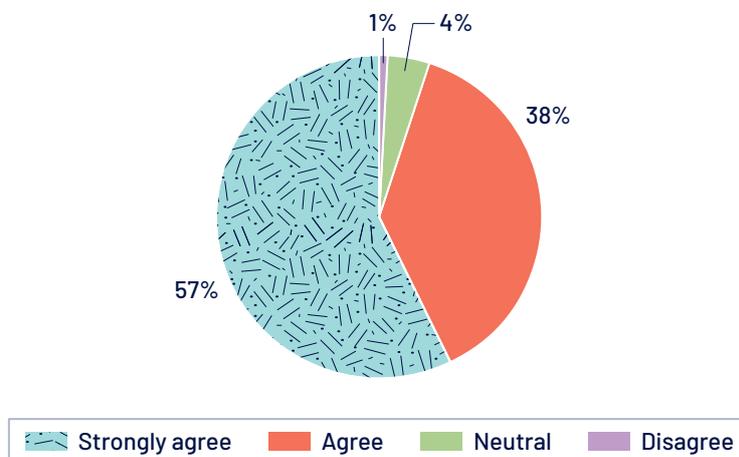
- First, we analyse the descriptive data to ascertain whether tutors believe that they are job-ready. This data, derived from the general survey component of the SenseMaker tool, illustrates that even in the presence of impediments to finding work, tutors are clearly motivated to obtain further employment or commence study after HIPPY.
- Second, we examine the narratives collected by SenseMaker to determine whether there is evidence for the hypothesised theory of change—that the support program will deepen and expand tutors’ human, social and psychological capital. The narratives suggest that the transitional labour market created by HIPPY does indeed increase tutors’ labour market competitiveness by developing these forms of capital.

- Third, we review some of the visual patterns generated by SenseMaker Analyst in light of workshop discussions. This allows us to identify some of the challenges that tutors and site coordinators face.

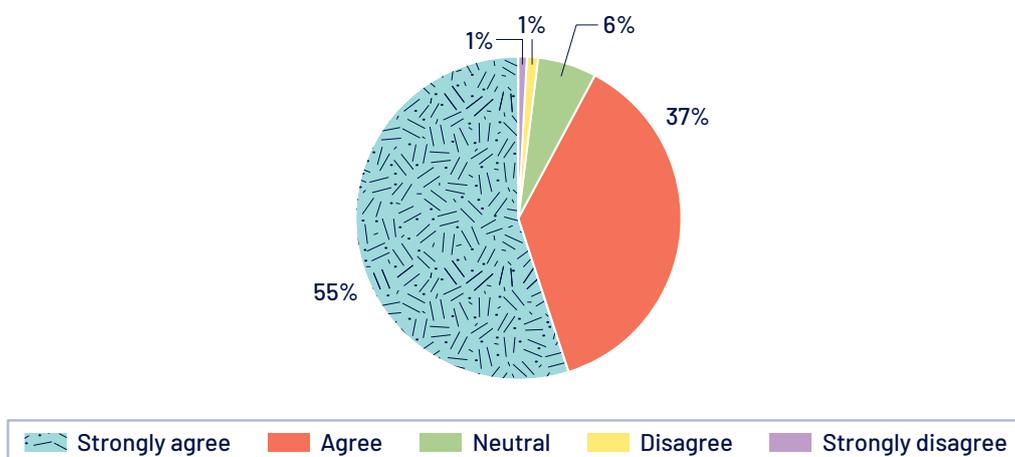
## HIPPY tutors are job-ready

Responses to questions about whether working with HIPPY has improved tutors’ job-readiness, confidence and information and communications technology (ICT) skills were overwhelmingly positive: 95% agreed or strongly agreed that their job-readiness had improved. Similarly, 92% of tutors agreed or strongly agreed that HIPPY had improved their confidence.

Figure 14 Whether working with HIPPY developed skills useful for future employment

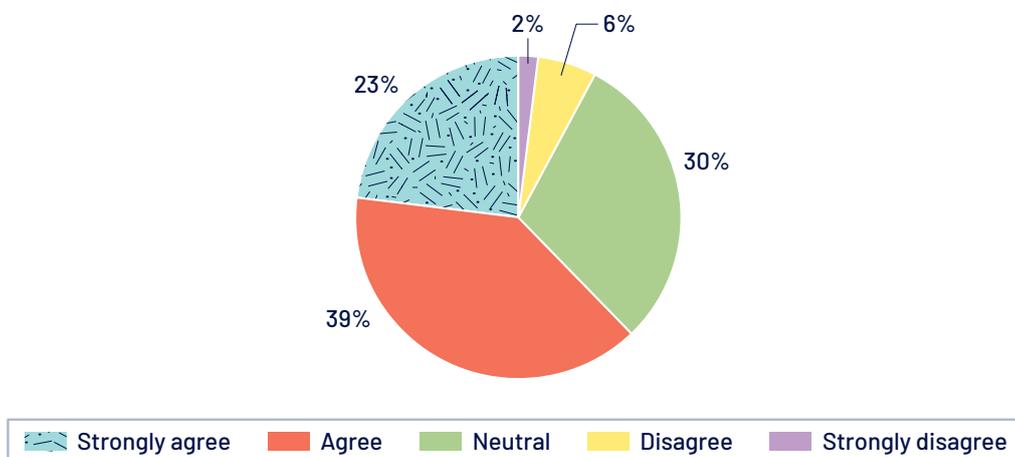


**Figure 15 Whether working with HIPPY improved confidence**



A smaller percentage (62%) agreed that their ICT skills had improved. There were many more neutral responses to this question. When we asked workshop participants why this might be the case, some registered surprise that this was a skill set they would develop working as a HIPPY home tutor.

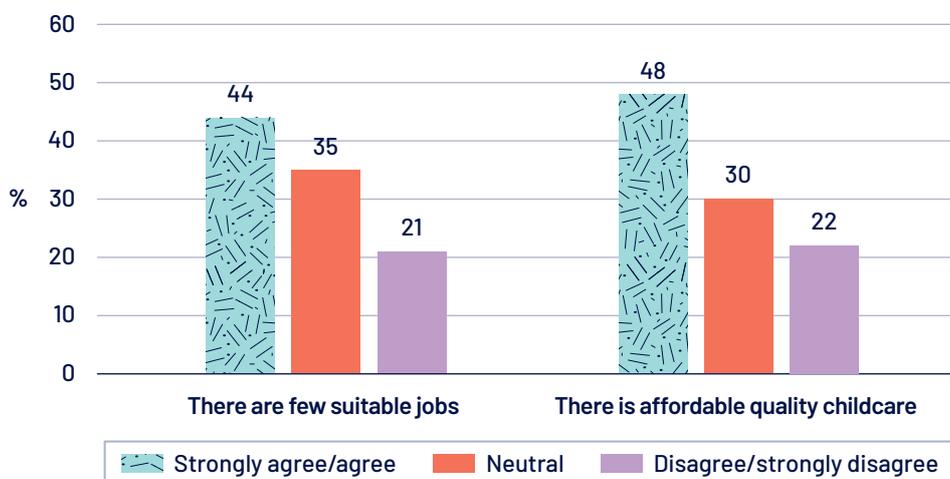
**Figure 16 Whether working with HIPPY improved ICT skills**



**HIPPY tutors face some barriers to employment which do not deter their intentions to continue to work and study**

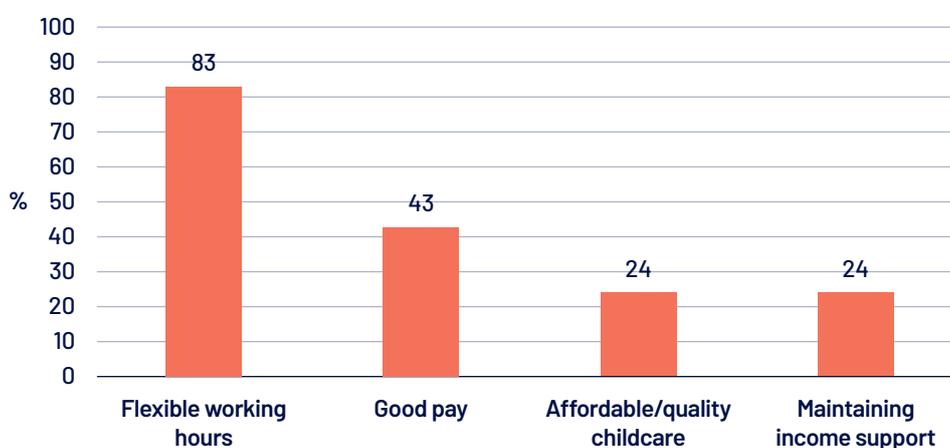
Many tutor respondents (44%) indicated that there were few suitable jobs where they lived. Only 22% of tutors indicated that there was a lack of affordable, quality child care; this, however, is a large minority, and 30% gave a neutral response which is certainly not an endorsement of available child care options.

**Figure 17 Tutors' barriers to employment**



When tutors were asked to select a factor or factors that might affect their decision to continue to work or take up additional hours, only 24% indicated that availability of affordable, good quality childcare was decisive. Many more (83%), however, indicated that flexible work arrangements were important and 43% indicated that they would be influenced by wage levels.

**Figure 18 Factors that influence decision to return to work or work additional hours**



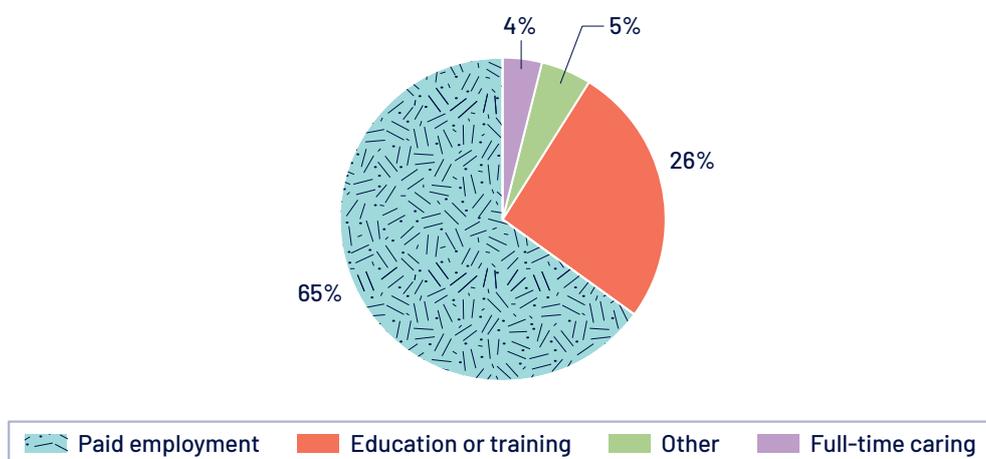
Note: Multiple factors could be chosen

### Post-HIPPY intentions

The existence of some barriers to employment, which are likely to reflect the health of regional labour markets and the tutors' ongoing caring responsibilities, does not seem to have influenced their aspirations about what they will do once they have finished the home tutor employment program.

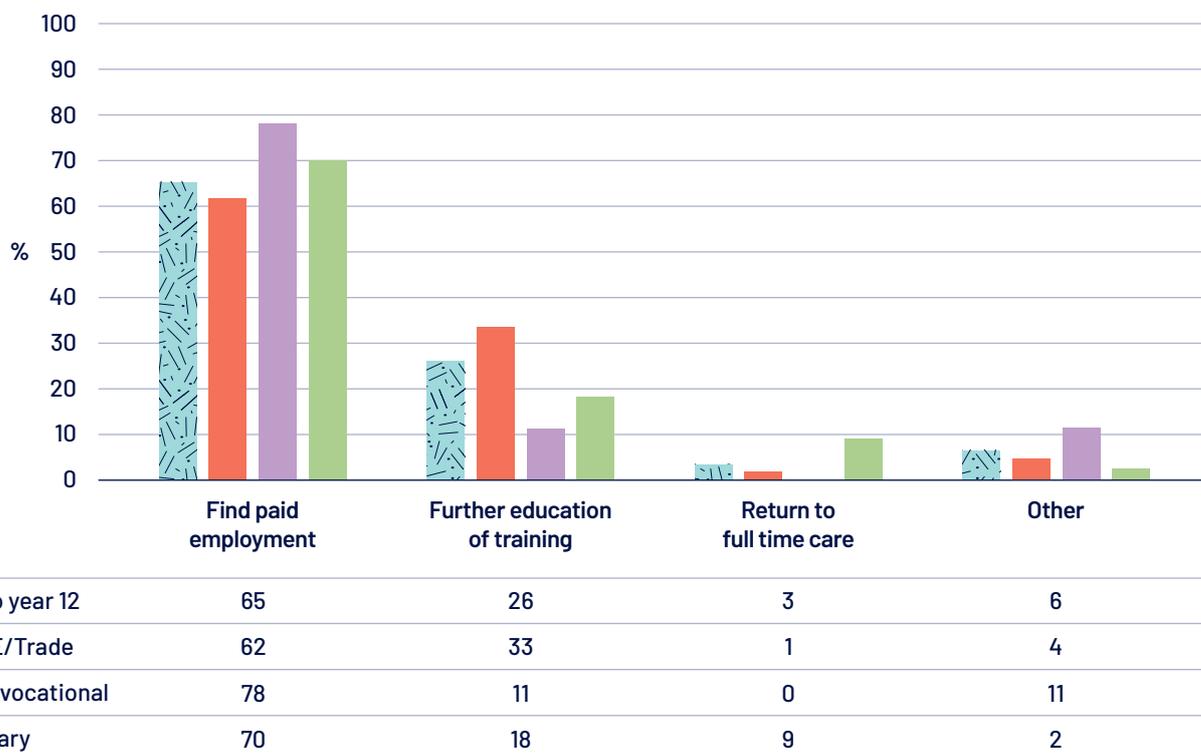
Among the tutor respondents, 65% indicated they would like to obtain employment after the program and another 26% planned to enrol in further study. The 'other' category, included in the figures below, includes wanting to volunteer or start a business. Only 4% indicated that they would return to full-time caring.

**Figure 19 Intention after HIPPY**



Analysing these intentions against the highest qualification obtained prior to participating in the program did not reveal any trends of note. Tutors with tertiary qualifications were less likely to indicate that they would pursue further study or training: only 18% of this group selected continued education, compared with 33% of those with a trade/TAFE qualification and a quarter of those who had not studied since high school. Across all levels of education, however, there was a strong preference to obtain employment, with approximately two-thirds of tutors indicating this intention regardless of the level of education they had achieved.

**Figure 20 Intention by level of education, %**

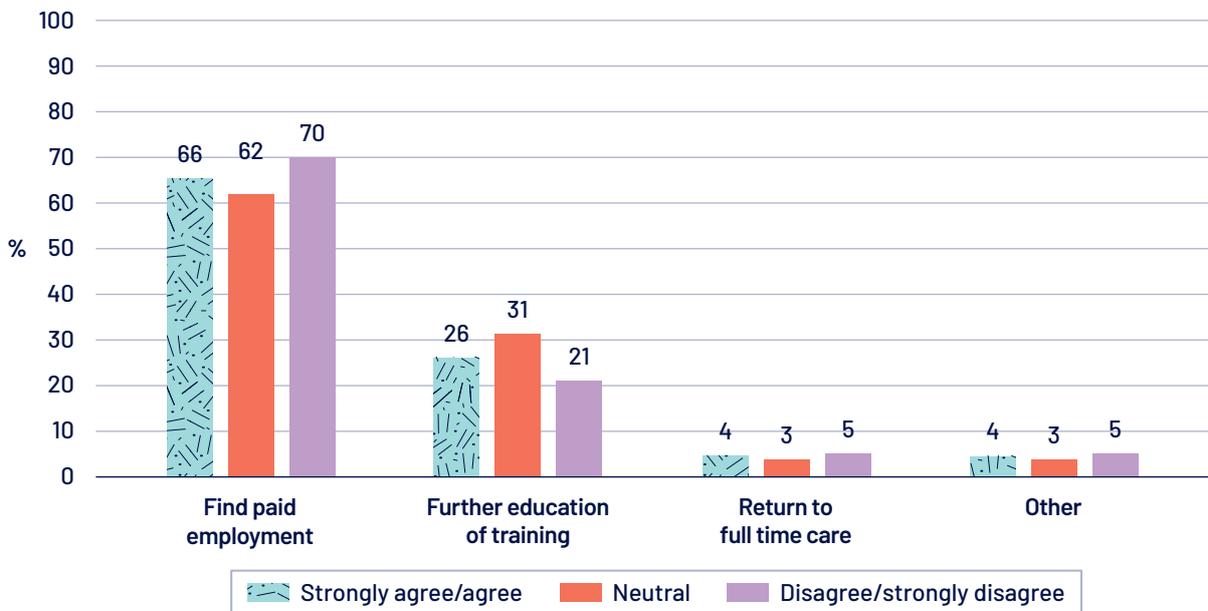


Whether or not current HIPPY tutors believed there was affordable, quality child care or whether there were few suitable jobs available where they lived, did not seem to affect their aspirations post-HIPPY:

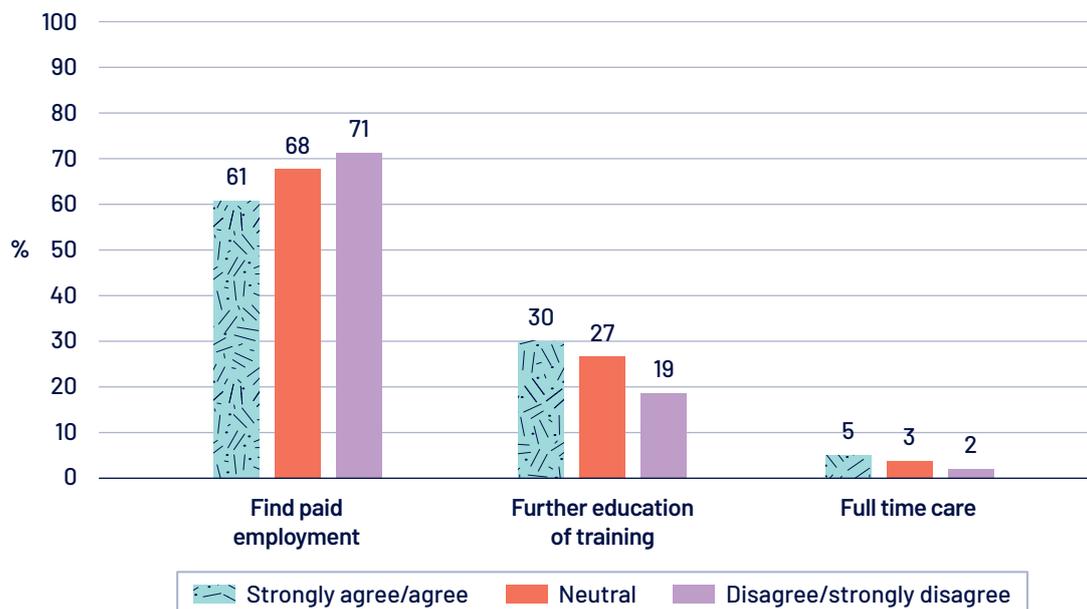
- Of those who agreed or strongly agreed that quality, affordable child care was locally available 66% wanted to attain paid employment and 26% planned to study further.
- Of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposition, 70% wanted to obtain paid employment and 21% intended to continue studying.
- Of those who agreed or strongly agreed that there were few suitable jobs where they live, 61% wanted to find paid employment and 30% planned to study further.
- Of the much smaller group who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, and who presumably thought that jobs were available, 71% wanted to obtain employment and 19% indicated that they would continue with study or training.

These proportions are all very similar. It could be that because at least one of their children—84% had more than one child—is transitioning to school the availability of child care might become less important for time management.

**Figure 21 Intentions by perceived availability of quality child care**



**Figure 22 Intentions by perceived availability of work**



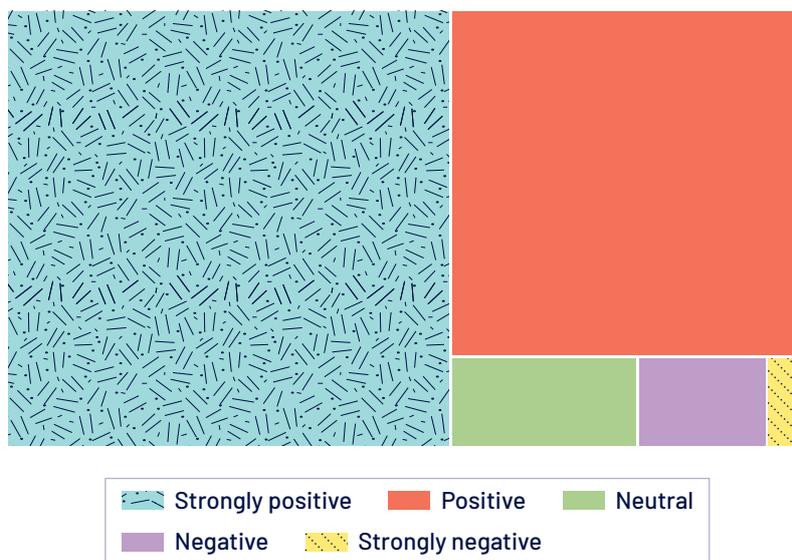
When asked why they had decided to become a HIPPOY tutor, only 20% indicated that they wanted a job; 41% wanted new skills, 37% wanted to make a difference to their community and 1% decided to apply to fulfil their income support activity requirements. The fact that 65% indicated that they intended to obtain paid employment at the conclusion of the program, and this seems true regardless of their assessment of the availability of work and childcare, suggests that something had changed. The narrative analysis helps us understand what that might be.

## Stories of transformation

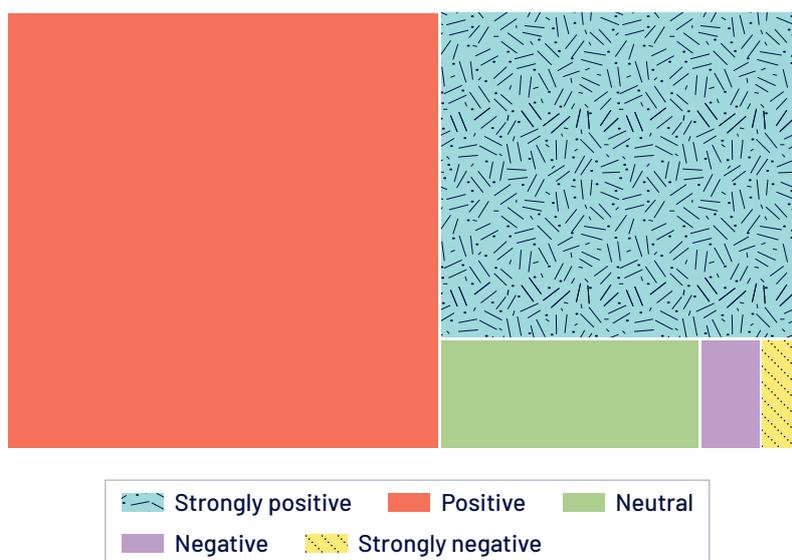
The discussion below is based on thematic analysis of the narratives, using the tutors' own words as much as possible. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, before conducting any narrative analysis, researchers review the patterns of responses aggregated by SenseMaker Analyst. The purpose is twofold: first to consider how the respondents felt about the narrative they shared; and second to understand how the tutors responded to the signification framework developed following the very first workshop and reflected in the triads and dyads included in the tool. These activities suggest themes and topics to explore through the narrative analysis.

The first question respondents were asked after recording their experience was how they felt about the experience; and 91% indicated feeling positive or strongly positive. They were then asked about the perceived impact of the events related on any other people mentioned in the narrative; and 73% of tutors indicated that the impact was positive or strongly positive. Both statistics suggest the overall tone and tenor of the narratives shared. Most of the stories conveyed pride and joy.

**Figure 23** How tutors felt about the experience that they've shared



**Figure 24** How tutors felt about the impact upon others of the experiences they've shared



### Tutors develop human and social capital

Most tutors reflected on what they had learned through their employment and engagement with the program. One tutor wondered ‘if my families are learning as much as I am’. Some mentioned specific topic areas related to the HIPPY curriculum, such as *everywhere learning*, enrichment sessions, behaviour-specific praise, and the 3Cs strategy (confirm, complete, correct). Many reflected on the generic skills they learned through HIPPY: communication and listening skills, time management and organisational skills, problem-solving skills and cultural awareness. Some reflected on their mutual learnings with their peers, particularly through the shared experience of motherhood: ‘we shared experiences as a mum and how to teach our children’.

Consistent with responses to the general research questions, the narratives indicate that the positive experience of learning and developing new skills encourages some tutors to undertake further study: ‘I have decided that after my 2 years with HIPPY to return to school and get my Certificate 3 in community service’. Another observed: ‘I feel more confident in learning new things and putting myself out there for different experiences’.

Developing new relationships is also a central part of a HIPPY tutor's role and most tutors reflected on the increased social connections they gained. As one noted: 'And lastly most importantly you can build friendships with the other tutors, the parents you're teaching and their children'. For some tutors, the bond they shared with their families was the most rewarding aspect of their experience, 'I would describe the satisfaction I have had being a HIPPY tutor in regard to the rapport I have built with my families', and for others this bond was memorable: 'The patience, the confidence and the trust for both the family and myself during the course of just about 2 years has been an experience we both will never forget.'

Coordinators also experienced unexpected yet mutually beneficial, learnings and relationships with their tutors:

*In my first year we struggled to find tutors at the beginning. At the last minute a mum from [South Asian country] contacted us as her son had just arrived to live with her and he had very little English. This mum decided to become a HIPPY tutor. She was in Australia studying education and was in the process of doing her doctorate. My first thought was what am I going to teach this woman who was so educated. It was an amazing opportunity to work with her, she just had a general thirst for knowledge no matter where it came from. As it turned out I was able to teach her a lot, she had immense book and learned knowledge, but had never really put it into action on the ground let alone in another country where English was not her first language. In the end I think we both taught each other things that we would have never experienced if we had not had this opportunity. The opportunity to work with this mother has set me up to be a better coordinator for everyone that has come after her.*

## **Doing makes a difference: tutors grow in self-efficacy and resilience**

As one tutor observed:

*When I started out being a HIPPY tutor, I did not have a lot of confidence. Over the past 15 months my confidence has boosted immensely because of being employed by HIPPY.*

This increased sense of confidence had multiple effects on tutors:

- increased interpersonal and social skills: 'I love the fact that working as a HIPPY home tutor enabled me to work on my social skills (meeting new people, going out of my comfort zone etc.) in my own way.'
- elevated self-assurance: 'I have grown so much professionally and personally, my confidence in my own abilities has grown.'
- greater self-worth and esteem: 'I was taught that my opinions and thoughts were valuable and that they mattered.'
- prompting explorations of self and identity: 'HIPPY has given me the chance to find myself again.'

For many tutors, developing confidence meant overcoming doubt and anxiety, which takes time and practice:

*Going into a new family's house when you haven't made a relationship is a bit nerve wrecking but once you go in and build a relationship it makes it so much more natural to just go in and have your HIPPY appointment with them.*

Working with families does not come without its challenges:

*I had a family who was very difficult to handle but through guidance of my team leader and skills I'm learning as a HIPPY tutor I was able to work with this family for two years and got them to graduate which was a huge achievement as I did not want to return to do another home visit after the first visit was so confronting.*

Indeed, tutors encounter families with complex needs:

*I am attending a home visit for one of my HIPPY families ... she tells me things aren't going very well at home and her husband is suffering from some mental health problems and has been going on a downward spiral for a while and won't seek help and she isn't sure if she will leave him.*

*The first time I visited this family, the mother was in her pyjamas and opened up to me about how lonely and isolated she feels. She also spoke to me about her past depression and her concerns about her son's speech.*

There were additional references to domestic violence by tutors. Many site coordinators reflected on the level of support required to enable tutors to undertake their new roles:

*It is hard work to train a mum coming into the workforce with their own young children, lack of education, work history, and level of self-care and awareness needed to work. Not only does the tutor come in with their own history and case load of experiences living in a disadvantaged community but we are then needing to rapidly train them to support other with families from complex backgrounds who are also their friends or attend the same schools. They need to be magically trained to be able to manage everything quickly so that we can build strong relationships and retain new families enrolling from the start.*

Despite the challenges, many tutors reflected that the resilience they had built also had an impact on career aspirations:

*Landing the role of HIPPY tutor was such a turning point in my life. I moved out of home when I was 17, left school in year 11, and went straight to an entry level job and that's where I stayed, and probably would have stayed had it not been for HIPPY.*

For many the experience led to formulation of new aspirations:

*Through working at HIPPY, I have decided that I would like to move into a family support role and through working with this mum I feel as though I am getting a bit of a taste as to what that may be like.*

For some this was surprising: 'I never saw myself working with children, but this is the right fit for me'; for others, it nurtured aspirations that had lain dormant. 'Being a HIPPY tutor helped me pursue my career of working in community services, which is an industry I have always wanted to work in but never got around to doing it as I started having my children.'

## **Witnessing transformation in self and others leads to hope and optimism**

As one tutor observed:

*When I come in to work and wear my HIPPY shirt I feel: PROUD, IMPORTANT, CONFIDENT and a POSITIVE role model for the families and children within our community. I feel more focused and less stressed; as if I can breathe easier ... rather than being isolated at home doing the housework with children hanging off me.*

Another commented:

*I can now proudly say that I am no longer working a minimum wage job, I'm working in a job that I love and most definitely wouldn't have had if I wasn't given the opportunities that the HIPPY program has afforded me.*

For many this pride was associated with a sense of accomplishment they felt seeing the impact of HIPPY on the families with whom they worked:

*HIPPY was the first time [this mum] felt as though she, herself had an impact on her son's development and learning. This was huge for [her], and a huge moment for me.*

Most took the opportunity to reflect on the enriched parent-child relationship HIPPY enables: 'I feel honoured and privileged to help parents see their potential as their child's first teacher'.

The desire to make a difference was nominated by 37% of respondents as their motivation to work for HIPPY. The narratives elucidate the centrality of this desire for tutors. Many tutors 'love being able to help people in our community and make a difference in people's lives'. When tutors realise that 'in being a HIPPY tutor I was making a difference to these families', they experience pride and professional satisfaction. Moreover, the narratives suggest that the experience of actually making a difference helps explain how tutors grow in confidence: witnessing the transformation in those with whom they are working confirms their capacity, not just their desire, to make a difference.

Likewise, for some site coordinators witnessing the personal growth in tutors was one of the most rewarding aspects of their role:

*The best experience is tutors that come to you with no confidence, petrified of the fact that they will have to stand up and talk in front of a group or even one on one with someone they don't yet know. Then to watch that confidence grow as the year progresses is very rewarding.*

*I would describe the training of a HIPPY tutor as the most important work I do. It is so inspiring to work with mostly young women and see the HIPPY methodology, systems and pedagogy transform the lives of these young women.*

## Parenting is paramount: flexibility and values alignment

The flexibility of the work was clearly important to many tutors:

*It was so nice having a workplace that supported me and understood my needs as a mother ... so I could be a mum and working woman at the same time.*

*The flexibility it [HIPPY] offers is the reason why I am able to meet my responsibilities as a mother.*

Nonetheless, this was not always easy. Observations by one coordinator indicated that tutors encounter obstacles to reconciling their parenting responsibilities with working:

*Tutor N's family were third generation unemployed and were living in the same northern suburbs that the generations before her had lived. Tutor N really saw the value of employment and her and her husband worked really hard to break the cycle of their families they grew up in and were committed to seeking employment for themselves. Tutor N would often have fall outs with her mother and sister over N working and needing the support of them to take care of her kids so she could come to work and be a HIPPY tutor. They would often call N selfish and not a good mother because she chose to work and not stay home and look after her children and receive parenting payments from the government.*

But not all tutors experienced conflicts of this kind. Some tutors discussed how HIPPY aligned with their values and their aspirations as parents and community members:

*Being a tutor has given me confidence in being the first teacher to my own children, but also helping my families to be their children's first teacher.*

*Being able to work in a company that is very family based has been perfect as I'm still able to be an active mum.*

One coordinator recalled a tutor who commented 'I am so happy to be a HIPPY tutor that when I finish working for HIPPY I do not want my and my children's life to be the same as it was before HIPPY'.

## Understanding the challenges tutors and coordinators faced

The two workshops in Brisbane and Melbourne were an opportunity to interrogate the visual patterns produced by SenseMaker Analyst with tutors, site coordinators and staff from HIPPY Australia (see Chapter 3). The following analysis is based on these workshop discussions, using narrative support for the findings.

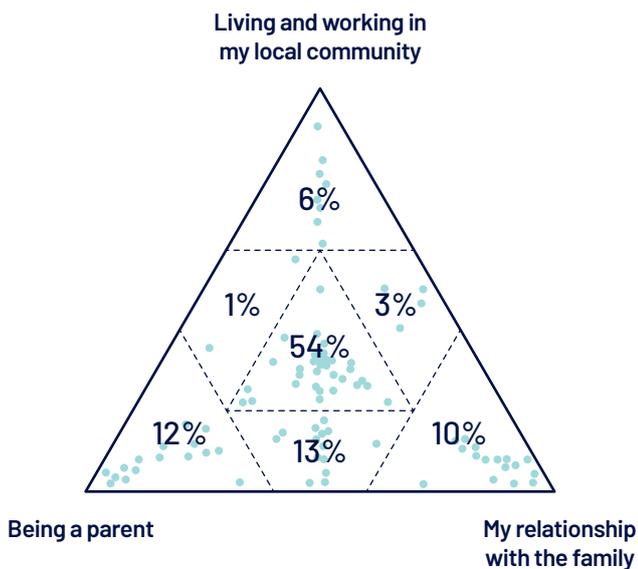
As anticipated by the SenseMaker methodology, this process added depth and complexity to the analysis. In particular the additional following challenges emerged as important:

- time and other pressures on lone parents
- working with ethnically diverse families, some with low English proficiency, and families facing multiple hardships
- the challenge, for coordinators, of managing a transitional labour market, which by design entails biennial staff turnover
- the challenges faced by tutors from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or CALD backgrounds who often assumed a leadership role in their communities and provided participating families with extra support.

## Challenges faced by lone parents

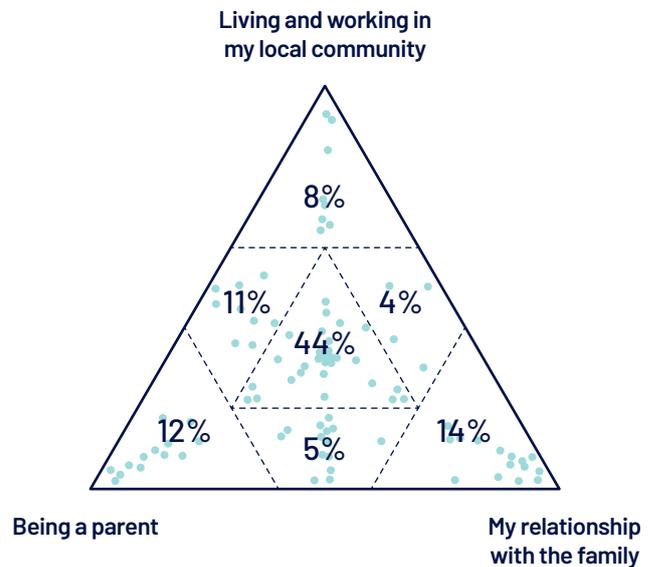
Workshop attendees were presented with the analysis of the triads which asked tutors what had helped or hindered their performance of their role. For each triad, the options had been developed following the initial design workshop with tutors, site coordinators and staff from HIPPY Australia (see Table 1). The two triads are presented in Figure 25 and Figure 26. Of note, 205 respondents selected a position in the first, which asked what assisted tutors; but only 108 selected a response to the triad asking about factors that set them back. This means either that the remaining tutors did not encounter factors that impeded them, or those that were listed were not relevant to the experience that they shared.

**Figure 25 Triad: What helped tutors do their job**



Over 50% selected the middle section, suggesting a combination of all three factors were relevant to the narrative shared. But there were also clear preferences among the remaining half of the respondents. The pattern of response is similar in Figure 25, with a majority selecting the centre of the triad but others having experienced particular impediments to their role.

**Figure 26 Triad: What set tutors back in their job**



Each triad was filtered by the demographic characteristics collected by SenseMaker. The only factor which was correlated with a different pattern of responses in these two triads was whether the tutor was a lone parent or lived with a partner. This analysis revealed that lone parents felt less connected to their local community and were more likely to indicate that parenting was an impediment to their work—with 29% of single parent respondents selecting this point of the triangle, compared to 9% of those who lived with a partner.

The workshop discussion of this finding reflected on the patchwork arrangements that lone parents developed to sustain their engagement as tutors: a set of strategies which combine formal and informal supports and have been described by Michelle Brady as 'gluing, catching and connecting' (Brady 2016). Despite the importance of this insight it was not directly reflected in any of the narratives collected. None of the respondents mentioned their living arrangements.

## Working with diverse and disadvantaged families

During the initial design workshop participants had indicated that the skills that they would like further developed fell into three categories, pertaining to relationships, communication and conflict (shown on Figure 27). This categorisation was largely endorsed, with 169 tutors selecting an option, although clearly very few thought they required additional support to manage conflicts.

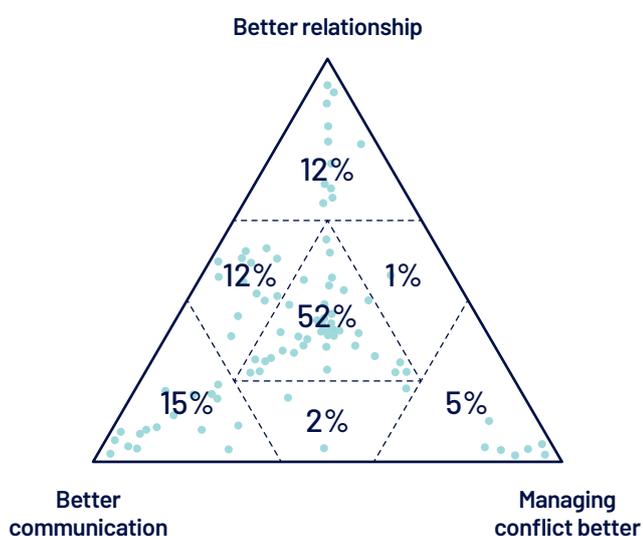
The workshop review of this triad led to considerable discussion about the difficulty of working with families who engaged with the program haphazardly, or who required additional assistance to maintain their commitment in light of factors including mental illness or other impediments to emotional wellbeing, domestic violence, children with a disability and children with behavioural difficulties.

Working with families that faced multiple challenges was mentioned multiple times in the narratives, but often in the context of an anecdote about how the tutor and/or the HIPPY provider organisation was able to assist the family. The recollections of tutors who participated in the workshops, however, had a slightly different tenor. They indicated that tutors would benefit from further preparation to work with families whose needs exceeded the supports provided by HIPPY materials.

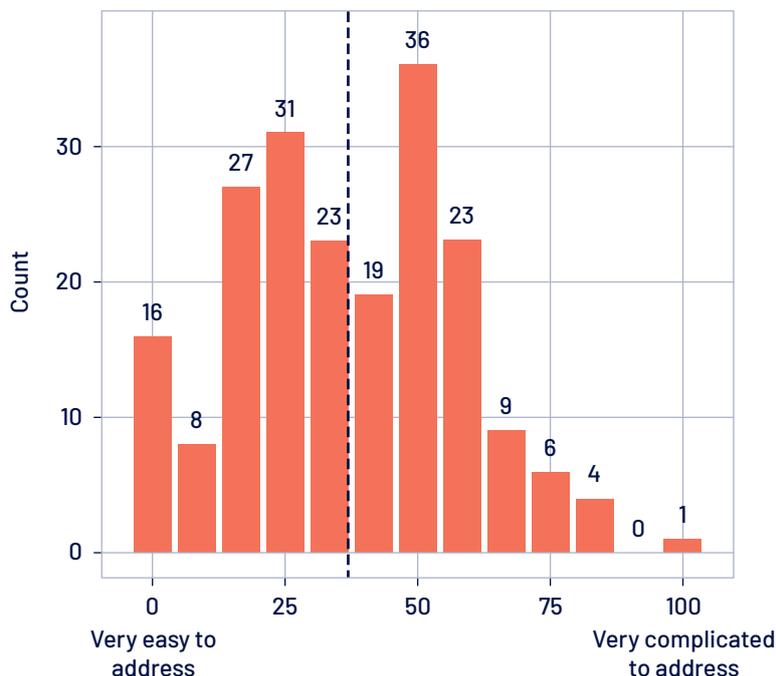
## The level and kind of professional support tutors require

The above recommendation was repeated when we discussed the two dyads about the degree of difficulty in the challenges tutors faced and the level of professional support they received.

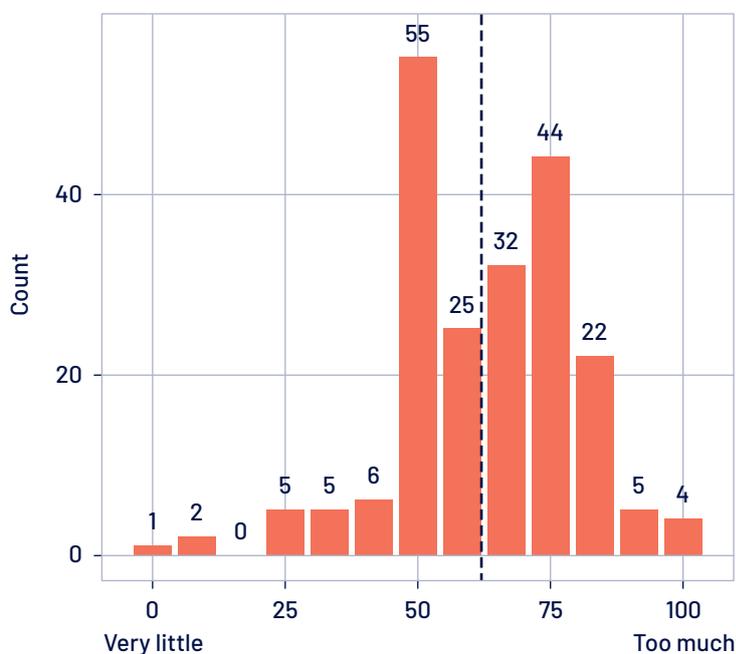
**Figure 27 Triad: Skill development needed to work with families**



**Figure 28 Dyad: Tutors' assessment of the difficulty of the challenges they faced**



**Figure 29 Dyad: Tutors' assessment of the level of support they received**



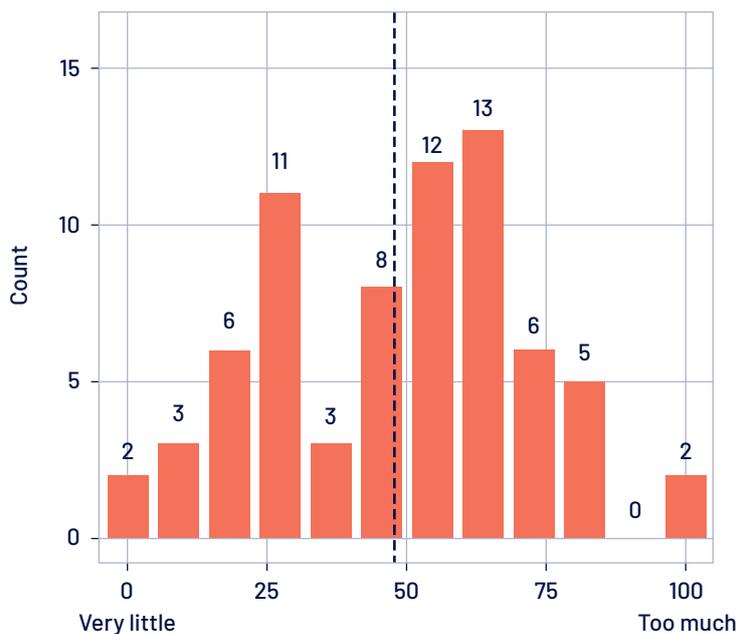
Together these two dyads suggest that most tutors receive sufficient, and some high levels, of support, perhaps more than they believe is required or warranted, particularly given that only a minority think that the challenges they face are too difficult to handle. In the discussion of these findings, however, tutors who participated in the workshops suggested that while they were well prepared to deliver HIPPY packs and activities, they were comparatively underprepared to deal with the complicated needs of the families with which they worked.

Of note, when these dyads were filtered by respondents' demographic characteristics the only correlation which suggested a distinct pattern was that tutors who held a tertiary qualification were more likely to indicate that challenges that they faced tended towards 'too complicated to address'.

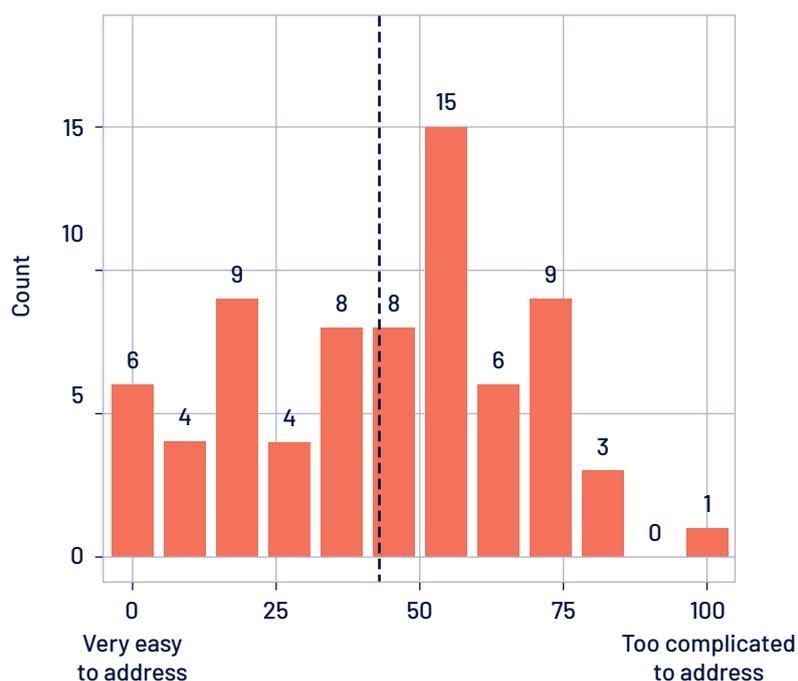
### Managing a transitional labour market

The coordinators completed a similar set of dyads; their responses are shown in Figure 30 and Figure 31.

**Figure 30 Coordinators' assessment of the level of support they received**



**Figure 31 Dyad: Coordinators' assessment of the complexity of challenges they faced**

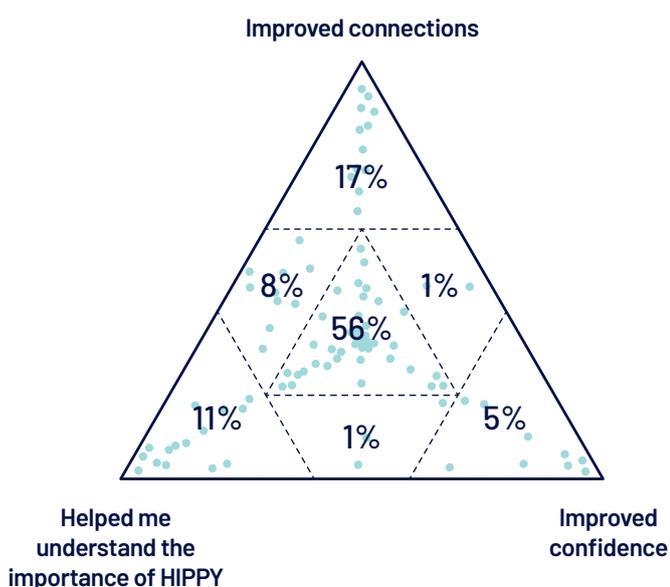


In discussion, coordinators recalled the challenges of recruiting and training tutors with every incoming HIPPY cohort. Although many coordinators had reflected that this was one of the 'best aspects of the program', frustration was also part of the narratives shared. There were comments like the following: 'how draining it can be sometimes and how frustrating starting from scratch every year and teaching people how to send emails and calendar invites'. Others worried that two years (but only 45 weeks) of work was too little time to properly prepare tutors for future employment and that some tutors 'will be a bit lost' at the conclusion of the program. This sentiment was reiterated by the tutors who participated in the workshops and expressed some annoyance that the program would end when they had just got on top of the work and developed supportive networks in the community.

### Cultural diversity and HIPPY tutors

One of the triads asked the tutors how their cultural background affected their work. There were 167 responses to this signifier question, while 45 indicated that it was not applicable to their experience.

**Figure 32 Triad: The importance of tutors' own cultural backgrounds**



These responses indicated that very few tutors thought their cultural background increased their confidence; for 17% it worked to improve their connections. Filtering by place of birth and Indigenous identification did not produce any distinctive patterns.

In the narratives, however, cultural diversity was largely portrayed as a positive. Some tutors mentioned how much they enjoyed working with diverse families and others reflected on their pride in working to help parents with limited English develop greater confidence and social connections. Again, the link between delivering HIPPY and exposure to additional life challenges was evident. One tutor reflected on working with a parent who was a resident but not a citizen:

***She would translate all the activity books into her own language. Now this mother is gaining more supports and services to empower her to learn English, leave her spouse, find work and make a life for her and her son here in Australia.***

Coordinators also celebrated stories of the growth they had witnessed in tutors from CALD backgrounds. One recalled a tutor from a refugee background who had disclosed that she had never answered a question in high school in Australia:

***Her goals for her time at HIPPY were to be able to talk to people and eventually groups of people. She started by talking at tutor trainings and then she was running cooking groups for our parents ... Eventually she did a speech at the Age 5 Graduation. She still comes back to the office to talk to everyone and is confident chatting, she even helps in a volunteer capacity talking to people at schools during our family recruitment drives. She is a loved and respected member of our HIPPY family.***

In the workshop discussions of the culture triad, it became apparent that for tutors from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds assuming the role of a tutor sometimes meant stepping into leadership in their communities. They experienced additional pressure to provide non-HIPPY related support to families from a similar background, which often extended delivery time but was unpaid. Additionally, they had reservations about some of the cultural presumptions implicit in HIPPY materials. One example given was that setting the table with knives and forks was not a practice shared by all cultural groups.

# 5 Building confidence and creating capital

The HIPPY Tutors Study provides reasons to conclude that working as a HIPPY home tutor improves job-readiness—increasing confidence, recalibrating and enlarging tutors’ aspirations for employment and further education. The program builds both the human and social capital of home tutors. Tutors develop new knowledge and skills, including generic work-related skills as well as specific skills in delivering and administering a combined parenting support and pre-school learning program. The program expands their social connections and social horizons. Importantly, however, the psychological capital of HIPPY home tutors also improves, and this seems to be the linchpin for the personal growth evident in most tutors’ narratives.

## Lessons from the HIPPY Tutors Study

Many tutors were deeply grateful for the opportunity that had been afforded to them: ‘You cannot pay for what [my children] gained from the program’ and ‘I always will and continue to support and advertise the HIPPY program to those around me’ and ‘Without HIPPY, my story could be so different!’ This gratitude permeated their accounts. Reading the narratives supplies a clear sense of the transformative impact of working as a home tutor. Quotes in the previous chapter are just a snapshot of the richness of the material collated. There is great diversity in the narratives, but there are some clear implications.

- The combination of training and work experience increases the tutors’ human capital: they develop and practise new skills. Moreover, by developing new relationships with each other and in their communities, tutors build social capital and, for some, an opportunity to overcome social isolation.
- Delivering the program is challenging, particularly given the diversity of families and the difficulties tutors face. Personal transformation is not easy either; it takes time and for some, courage. But with the right support and opportunities it is possible to build confidence and foster new aspirations.
- The fact that tutors were able to witness the changes in themselves and others served as positive reinforcement. This experience was also clearly a source of professional satisfaction. More importantly, it changed the way that tutors thought about themselves and their agency. It helped them develop the key attributes of psychological capital: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience.

- Coordinators provide important levels of support for home tutors. Coordinator narratives reflected on the many challenges faced by many tutors and their great pride in facilitating personal and professional growth among tutors. Tutors too recognised the value of the opportunity granted to them and of the support they had access to.
- This is all made possible because HIPPY constructs a flexible, transitional labour market. Moreover, the program aligns with tutors’ values, particularly as they pertain to their parenting role.

## Recommendations

The world of work is changing (Cassells et al. 2018). The following recommendations have been developed to consolidate the ways in which HIPPY advances the human capital of participating tutors in preparation for further engagement in this world. To this end we reviewed innovations in occupational and workplace training. Key developments include the development of stackable modules that build towards accreditation and the addition of advanced/accelerated options which reflect the prior experiences of participants (see Austin et al. 2012; Choy et al. 2008). The recommendations also include responses to some of the challenges indicated by workshop participants.

- **Developing ICT skills:** These skills are central to labour market competitiveness, but their development among tutors seems somewhat uneven. Tutors would benefit from a more intentional approach to this.
- **Certification:** To advance the labour market competitiveness of home tutors, HIPPY should investigate the accreditation of the Pathways to

Possibilities professional development program as a Certificate 1.

- **Advanced training options:** Given tutors' varying levels of prior work experience and education, HIPPY should consider the inclusion of accelerated and advanced models of skill development in Pathways to Possibilities.
- **Additional training modules:** Tutors would benefit from additional and specific training modules to increase their preparedness to work with complex families. This would include understanding vicarious trauma and how to successfully navigate the boundaries of their role while remaining attentive and responsive to families who experience crisis, especially related to mental health issues and domestic violence.
- **A stackable system of recognition:** In developing this additional training support HIPPY Australia should create *stackable* modules within Pathways to Possibilities as a foundation for further certification in accredited training in community services and/or child care.
- **Regional communities of practice:** in light of the above recommendation and noting the struggles some coordinators have in managing a TLM that requires biennial staff turnover and new recruits with each HIPPY cohort, developing regional communities of practice may assist coordinators to workshop strategies and collate their learnings.
- **Continuing cultural adaptation:** While the narratives and workshop discussions confirm that some sites work on ensuring that program content is culturally accessible, further adjustments could be made. Tutors are an important source of insight into the delivery of HIPPY in culturally diverse communities and households and could assist in making further revisions.
- **Alumni networks:** It is clear that some tutors would like the opportunity for paid employment to be continuing. But this would contradict the logic of a *transitional* labour market. Additionally, coordinators suggest that some tutors would benefit from ongoing support. Creating an alumni network which could offer ongoing peer support and access to resources could address these concerns in part.
- **Further research:** While the study has found significant support for the transformative effect of working as a home tutor, and validates the theory of change, further research into the sustainability of these changes is warranted.

## The HIPPY Tutors Study's contribution to broader policy discussion

There is no single solution to the policy problems to which the HIPPY home tutor program responds, namely the multiple challenges women face transitioning back into employment after having children and the resulting low employment rates for mothers of young children.

In its 2015 review of the Australian social security system, the McClure report concluded that 'the current social security system does not have a coherent approach to supporting the significant transitions that can affect an individual during their life' (Department of Social Services 2015, p. 8). McClure acknowledges that achieving a successful transition is more difficult when jobseekers face labour market disadvantages that can arise, *inter alia*, from caring responsibilities, social isolation, low levels of education and skills. The very challenges that HIPPY tutors face.

Australia has had a long history of providing direct financial support to families, through maternity allowances and child endowments in the first half of the twentieth century, although there have always been time limits on income support. In 1973, the Widows Pension was reformed into the Commonwealth Supporting Mothers Benefit, which at that time paid single mothers two pounds a week to assist with the costs of raising children, to be paid until the youngest child turned 16 years of age (Daniels 2009). The current Parenting Payment was first introduced in 1998, shortly after mutual obligation became the framework for unemployment benefits.

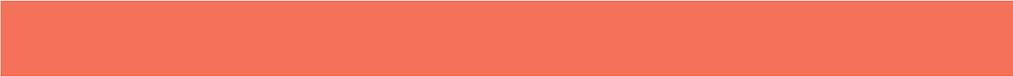
In the two decades following, mutual obligation has shaded into a stricter compliance-surveillance regime that compels participation through the threat of sanctions/financial penalties. Over the same period, financial support for parenting has also become increasingly conditional on the same principles of labour market activation. Rather than promote financial security or mitigate child poverty through direct transfers, the rationale is to hasten women's transition back into employment.

ParentsNext, the current pre-employment support program for eligible parents in receipt of parenting payments, has two streams: intensive and targeted. Currently, parents in receipt of parenting payments and who live in specified local government areas

may be deemed eligible for the Intensive Stream of ParentsNext once their youngest child turns 6 months old. The program is overlaid by a Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF), which is linked to a participation plan that results in financial sanctions if parents do not meet sufficient reporting milestones with sufficient regularity (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2019).

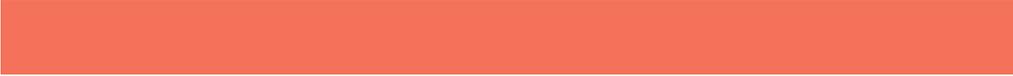
The recent Senate Inquiry into ParentsNext concluded that the evidence base that would justify this form of intervention was somewhat sketchy. Numerous submissions highlighted the deleterious effects of the regime on parents who experienced greater financial insecurity and high levels of anxiety (Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee 2019). Such findings are consistent with qualitative research into the experiences of parents in receipt of income support, particularly lone parents, during the period of welfare reform since the late-1990s (Brady & Cook 2015; Cook et al. 2009).

This study has demonstrated the utility of an alternative approach that features aspiration not activation. For many home tutors the experience is transformative. The benefits are clear. Moreover, increasing the home tutors' job-readiness and labour market competitiveness is achieved by providing an employment opportunity, rather than increasing the conditionality of income support. Creating a peer workforce in program delivery and thereby a transitional labour market, is an alternative pathway to increasing economic participation among women with young children who face labour market disadvantages. Working as a HIPPY tutor builds confidence and creates human, social and psychological capital; precisely what is needed to navigate the changing labour market.



# Acronyms and abbreviations

ALMP	Active labour market policy
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BSL	Brotherhood of St. Laurence
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
DSS	Department of Social Security
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
HILDA	Household Income and Labour Dynamics [survey]
HIPPY	Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters
HLE	Home learning environment
HLS	HIPPY Longitudinal Study
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ICT	Information and communication technology
LMS	Learning Management System
LSAC	Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children
JET	Jobs, Education and Training Program
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P2P	Pathways to Possibilities
RPC	Research and Policy Centre
TCF	Targeted Compliance Framework
TLM	Transitional labour market



# Glossary

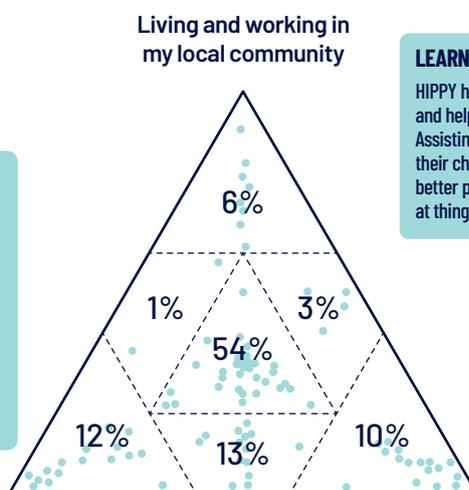
<b>Collective interpretation</b>	the process of bringing together multiple and diverse stakeholders to interpret the findings generated with SenseMaker Analyst to facilitate the act of sense making
<b>Cynefin framework</b>	the conceptual framework that provides the foundations for the SenseMaker process, both in the design of the online tool and associated strategies for collective interpretation
<b>Dyad</b>	a type of signifier question in the shape of a sliding scale between two extremes. Participants are asked to indicate where their narrative sits along the spectrum
<b>Narrative</b>	an account of a specific experience triggered by the prompt question
<b>Prompt question</b>	open-ended question designed to elicit a memory of a specific experience related to the topic of inquiry.
<b>Self-signification</b>	the process of participants self-coding, or self-interpreting, their narrative by answering a set of signifier questions
<b>SenseMaker</b>	the online tool used to capture narratives and responses to the signification framework via a website link or mobile application
<b>SenseMaker Analyst</b>	the online analytical software used to generate pattern visualisation and assist with analysis of data collected through SenseMaker
<b>Sense making</b>	the act of giving meaning to data collected through SenseMaker and turning these insights into actionable strategies
<b>Signification framework</b>	the 'survey' instrument of the SenseMaker tool that includes the prompt question, signifier questions and multiple-choice questions
<b>Signifier questions</b>	follow-up questions related to the narrative to give additional layers of meaning
<b>Triad</b>	a type of signifier question in the shape of a triangle with predefined concepts at each point. Participants indicate, inside the triangle, the relative importance of each concept in relation to their narrative.

# Appendix: Triad with narratives displayed

## What helped you do your job?

### MY PERSONAL HIPPY EXPERIENCE

As a mum of four children and then learning about HIPPY and becoming a HIPPY tutor I have learnt a huge amount about childhood development. I am currently doing HIPPY with my youngest child and he has come leaps and bounds in his development. Being a tutor has given me confidence in being the first teacher to my own children, but also helping my families to be their children's first teachers. My experience has been such a positive one and I have enjoyed being part of the HIPPY team. I would definitely recommend HIPPY to families with youngsters.



### LEARNING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

HIPPY helped me connect to my South Sudanese community and help them to understand the Australian Curriculum. Assisting them to realise that they can be the first teachers of their children's lives was a big thing. It also assisted me to be a better parent. I believe I am more patient and take time to look at things from my child's perspective.

Being a parent

My relationship with the family

### BREAKTHROUGH

I was at a home visit with one of my families whose child has a global developmental delay. He was home from preschool that day and we were going through the previous week's pack. We were speaking about an activity where he was to draw a picture of his family. He started telling me who was in his picture and his mother began to cry. HIPPY was the first time she felt as though she, herself had an impact on her son's development and learning. This was huge for her, and a huge moment for me. I realised that in being a HIPPY tutor I was making a difference to these families.

This example was used in the SenseMaking workshops in Brisbane and Melbourne

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## **Transforming employment aspirations** Results of the HIPPY Tutors Study

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2020

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging.



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