What are the goals of the program?
The first five years of life are a time of enormous developmental growth for children, and their environment can have a powerful impact on what they learn. Children in low-income households or communities can be at risk of falling behind because parents or caregivers may have less resources and time to create an environment where children can learn, play, and engage. The Colorado Parent and Child Foundation (CPCF) operates Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). The PAT and HIPPY programs support and train parent educators who visit primarily low-income families at home (i.e., home visiting) to share age-appropriate learning materials and help provide meaningful parent and child interactions to support development.

What was the purpose of evaluation?
The PAT and HIPPY programs utilize evidence-based home visiting models. The PAT program sites use the national PAT model, which has demonstrated statistically significant effects on parent and child outcomes, in particular the frequency with which parents engage in activities with their children. The SIF funded evaluation assessed the implementation or expansion of the six PAT and one HIPPY program sites and the extent to which they were implementing their models with fidelity.

What did we learn from the evaluation?
Some key findings from the evaluation are listed below.

Location and Characteristics of Families Served
- Children living closer to the program site were more likely to be served.
- The program was successful in reaching its target population of low-income families; 33% of parents in the program had less than a high school education (compared to 12% of US adults age 25 and older); 31% of families in the program reported an income of less than $20,000; and 39% reported an income between $20,000 and $40,000.¹

Children’s Early Literacy Outcomes
- Children’s gender and the frequency of literacy activities in the home were significant predictors of language development and ability to communicate with others (as measured by the Ages and Stages questionnaire). Boys were 3.8 times more likely to have communication concerns, and a child whose parent reported lower levels of literacy activities was 3.3 times more likely to have concerns.

¹ Education level data was available for about 50% of parents, and household income data was reported by less than 50% of families.
**Parent Engagement**

- Parents reported statistically significant increases in talking about books with their child, looking at/talking about shapes with their child, and their child’s ability to write his/her name.

**Program Staff and Volunteer Reports**

- Staff and volunteers reported that participation in the program increased the organizations’ capacities in different ways including serving more families, providing a new aspect of programming, or expanding their existing program.

**Notes on the evaluation**

The evaluation took place in 2014 as the CPCF neared the end of its second year in the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant process. CPCF did not complete the 5-year SIF grant process; it chose to discontinue after two years of participation. Furthermore, the HIPPY program site participated in qualitative data collection only.

**How is the CPCF using the evaluation experience and findings to improve?**

As a result of participation with the SIF, the Colorado Parent and Child Foundation reported making changes to improve their PAT and HIPPY programs. To work towards reaching their goal of serving more families, PAT and HIPPY program sites hired additional program staff, provided additional services such as a bilingual family night, and expanded into new regions in Colorado.