Supporting Incarcerated Parents and their Children: Use of Evidence from Parenting Inside Out to Inform Research and Practice Efforts in Wisconsin

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Today’s Plan

• Background on parental incarceration
• What we know about interventions for incarcerated parents
• Evidence from Parenting Inside Out
• Discussion and implications
• Q&A
BACKGROUND
Rising U.S. Incarceration Rates

Prison Populations Worldwide

Incarceration rate of inmates per 100,000 people for selected countries.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Incarcerated Parents

State and Federal Prison
Of 1.5 million prisoners, 809,800 were parents

Parents of minor children: 53%
Not parents: 47%

Incarcerated Fathers and Mothers in State and Federal Prison

- Fathers: 92%
- Mothers: 8%

Inmates are parents, too.

Center for Restorative Justice Works supports visits for children of incarcerated parents in California.
Children of Incarcerated Parents

More than 5 million U.S. children have an incarcerated parent.

1 in 8 Poor Children
1 in 9 Black Children
1 in 14 All Children
Implications for Families & Children

- Trauma, stigma, housing and childcare instability, reduced income, risk of CPS involvement\(^1,2\)
- Children at increased risk: behavior and health problems, cognitive delays, and academic difficulties\(^4\)
- Findings regarding risk vs. protection
  - Increased internalizing & externalizing behaviors\(^3\)
  - Decreased aggression and abuse\(^4\)

Reentry & Parenting Pathways

• Most inmates return to communities and families
  • 2/3 are rearrested; more than half reincarcerated within 3 years of release\(^5\)
  • 2017: 622,400 individuals released from state and federal prison\(^6\)

• High-quality parenting may mediate the negative relation between parents’ criminality and children’s poor outcomes\(^7\)

• Strong family ties (contact) and assuming family roles can lower risk for recidivism\(^8\)

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Why parenting programs in corrections?

**PARENTS**

- Better communication skills
- Positive contact
- Increased family support after release
- Prosocial success
- Reduced recidivism

**CHILDREN**

- Strengthening skills relevant to life after incarceration
- Lower transmission of antisocial behavior from parent to child
- Decreased risk of incarceration in future

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What do we know about parenting programs?

- Research demonstrates strong link between parenting programs and decreased child antisocial behaviors\(^9,10\)
- Few studies, however, have examined impact of parenting interventions on mothers & fathers in criminal justice system


Parenting Inside Out

Welcome

The Pathfinder Network provides justice system-impacted individuals and families the tools and support they need to be safe and thrive in their communities. We provide programs and services for incarcerated individuals through the Oregon Department of Corrections and for parents, children, and families in the community.

Parenting Inside Out

Funding a child can be overwhelming. Parenting Inside Out (PIO) is an evidence-based program that addresses the unique needs of incarcerated parents and those of their children in a classroom setting. It guides legal adults through a cognitive-behavioral parenting management skills course to help each parent develop a parenting plan specific to the needs of their family.

Created by scientists, policy makers, and practitioners, PIO is based on extensive research and practice. It is derived from the Parent Management Training (PMT) curriculum, which appears on the American Psychological Association’s Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) list of evidence-based practices. In 2012, PIO was the equal title of evidence-based parenting program for juvenile justice-involved parents and the curriculum of choice for corrections and community programs across the U.S.

About Parenting Inside Out

Features of Parenting Inside Out include:

Adult Learning Theory. PIO is grounded in adult learning theory and is designed for the adult learner.

Learner-Centered Design. Throughout the program, coaches and learners collaborate in setting goals for and the methods for reaching those goals.

Outcomes-Based Instructional Design (OBID). OBID is a unique and proven-centered, real-life adult skills because adults and parents are interested in solving problems that relate to day-to-day life.

Institute for Research on Poverty

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
FINDINGS FROM PARENTING INSIDE OUT STUDY
Parenting Inside Out

- PIO based on Parent Management Training with additional elements
- Designed specifically for incarcerated parents
  - Develop social skills, communication techniques, and parenting strategies
PIO Study Overview

- Parent Child Study
- Randomized controlled trial (RCT)
  - Compared PIO fathers/mothers to control group
- Four Oregon DOC prisons (3 men, 1 women)
- Criteria:
  - Parenting role for child 3-11 years old
  - No crime against child; legal right to contact
  - Less than 9 months remaining
PIO Delivery

- Delivered in group/class format
- 15 parents/class
- 2.5 hr. sessions
- 12 weeks
- 90 hours of total instruction
Data and Sample

Data for current analysis come from:

- **Pre-release (during prison)**
  - BASELINE
- **Post-PIO (during prison)**
  - WAVE 3
- **Post-release**
  - WAVE 5
- **Post-release**
  - WAVE 6

- **<9 months pre-exit**
- **PIO**
- **End of PIO**
- **EXIT**
- **6-months post**
- **1-year post**

\[ N = 359 \text{ participants (161 men or 45%; 198 women or 55%)} \]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>PREDICTOR</th>
<th>OTHER FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting stress</td>
<td>Participation in PIO compared to “services as usual”</td>
<td>Family contact during prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent depression</td>
<td></td>
<td>Female/male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive parent-child interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to play an active role in child’s life</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prior arrests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of relationship with caregiver</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prior criminal behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to caregiver</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prior substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Years in prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental health/learning diagnoses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td></td>
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1Self-report measures after PIO intervention. 2Self-report measures 6-months post-release; 3Based on official police records at 1-yr post-release.
## Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PIO N=189</th>
<th>CONTROL N=170</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%/Mean (SD)</td>
<td>%/Mean (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>31.9 (6.6)</td>
<td>31.9 (6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in prison</strong></td>
<td>1.4 (1.8)</td>
<td>1.3 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child contact at baseline (calls, letters, visits)</strong></td>
<td>9.1 (12.6)</td>
<td>10.1 (12.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child contact 6-months post-release</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-resident</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident but some contact</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident and no contact</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings Post-PIO Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME MEASURE</th>
<th>DIRECTION</th>
<th>RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting stress</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>PIO group had 9% lower levels of parental stress than control group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent depression</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>PIO group had 7% lower levels of depression than control group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those low at baseline, PIO group more likely to play an active role than control group.
Findings at 6-Months & 1-Year Post-Release

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OUTCOME MEASURE</th>
<th>DIRECTION</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>At 1-year post-release, PIO group had a 37% reduction in rearrests then control group (26% men, 48% women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal behavior</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>At 6-months post-release, PIO group more likely to abstain from criminal behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>At 6-months post-release, PIO group more likely to abstain from substance abuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Parent Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question asked</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommend PIO to other parents?</td>
<td>Average score was 4.5 on scale of 1-5 (5=“strongly recommend”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How helpful was the information received?</td>
<td>70% rated PIO as “very” or “quite” helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How positive an effect did PIO have?</td>
<td>90% rated PIO as having a “very positive” or “positive” effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How useful to you as parent?</td>
<td>95% rated PIO as “very” or “somewhat” useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Takeaways

• Promising findings:
  – Improved mental health (depression, stress)
  – More positive parent-child interactions
  – Some improvement in parent-caregiver relationships
  – Decreases in rearrests, criminal behavior, substance abuse

• Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the program

• Potential for differences in contact among non-resident parents (area for future research)
Other developments...

• Parents wanted more time to process the issues coming up in class and to continue meeting after PIO ended (i.e., support group component)
• Selected parents were later offered contact visits with their children
• Other versions were created (jail, community)
• Multimodal efforts (e.g., WA state led by Dr. Eddy)
  • PIO + Relationship Strengthening + Job Skills
What is happening in Wisconsin and locally?

Dane County Jail

WI State Prisons

Community Reentry
Fathers in PIO Class at Dane County Jail
Policy Implications & Future Directions

- Support research that helps us understand how to promote effective parenting and involvement among CJ-involved parents

- Consider programs and policies at multiple levels
  1. Classroom (in and out of prison)
     - Expand parenting services to male WI DOC facilities
  2. Contact and communication (in and out of prison)
     - Technology for video visits; “Get on the Bus” programs
  3. Link services to offer continuum of care
     - Network of family-focused centers that offer “Pathways for Parents after Prison”
Policy Implications Continued

4. Reduce barriers that make parent involvement with children and family unity difficult
   • Address **housing obstacles** for returning parents
   • Adjust **child support** orders
   • Promote **employment opportunities** with living wages
   • Collaborate with and train **parole/probation agents** to consider needs of children with returning parents

5. Consider **alternative sentencing models** for non-violent primary parents
If you don’t be in your kids’ life, they’re gonna turn to the streets. Then, when they turn to the streets, they’re gonna become part of the prison system, and then it’s gonna keep going on and on, with their kids, and then the next kids. The cycle gotta be broken. We need more parents and more fathers to be in their kids’ life, because the fathers play a major part of their life. If they don’t got no fathers, they’re gonna go out to these gangs out here and try to get love from them. I would prefer them to stay in their kids’ life, be their biggest support system. Every kid got a dream to be something, and if you be behind them and support them, they can reach their goals on what they want.”

“I’d tell him don’t never leave his kids, no matter what the outcome may be. Always stay in your kids’ life, because your kids need you.
Thank you!

Questions and Discussion

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