DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Parenting Inside Out Implementation 2021

MN MODEL JAIL PRACTICES LEARNING COMMUNITY

What is Parenting Inside Out (PIO)

Parenting Inside Out is an evidence-based, cognitive skills-based parenting course designed specifically for incarcerated parents, which focuses on decision-making and problem-solving. Jails and community partners in the MN Model Jail Practices Learning Community are implementing the PIO-24 Curriculum (http://www.parentinginsideout.org/curriculum/) which consists of twelve 2-hour courses.

Parent education is a key factor for parent resilience, especially for those who have experienced childhood trauma[i]. It reinforces the parent role for the incarcerated parent and jail staff. Improving parenting skills combined with more opportunities to practice those skills can improve communication and the parent-child relationship and motivate more family visits. The PIO curriculum has demonstrated improvements in parent-child relationships, reductions in recidivism, and increases in overall child wellbeing.

2021 Minnesota PIO Statistics

As of August 2021, 44 individuals from both jails and community partners received training on PIO through the learning community. In 2021, 10 out of 40 (25%) trained facilitators implemented PIO, from five jails and two community sites. COVID significantly delayed PIO implementation.

	Total # PIO Cohorts	Median # of Participants per Cohort	Total Number of Participants (1 or more lessons)	Total Number who Completed Course
Jails	12	5	56	21 (38%)
Communities	2	1	1	0 (0%)

Program Structure

Implementation decisions varied across jails. The MN Model Jail Practices Learning Community continue to monitor implementation strategies to support continuous improvement.

Jail Facility Eligibility Requirements for Incarcerated Parents

Requirement	Required	Not Required	Prioritized
Must be a parent		6	2
(If not a parent) Must be a grandparent or caregiver		6	
Must have children under 18		6	3
Must have current or recent custody (legal)		6	
Must be clear of disciplinary status (general population)	6		
Must have minimum expected length of stay in jail	1*	5	1 (13 weeks)
Must begin course at lesson 1	3*	3	

Requirement	Required	Not Required	Prioritized
Must begin before a certain lesson (If starting at Lesson 1 is *not* required)	1 (before 3rd lesson)	2	
Must not be incarcerated for a crime with a child victim	1	5	
Facility requires a minimum # of participate to offer the course (E.g., would not hold course for 1 person)	1	5	
Facility has a maximum # of people who can participate	5^	1	
Must not have any unexcused absence to continue course	1	5	

* Includes Shakopee Women's Prison, minimum is 6.
^ The maximum number of participants was 6 and 12 and was often due to space.
(Stearns=6, Sherburne=12, Shakopee=12, Ramsey=12, Olmsted=10)
Ramsey- standard is that you can have 2 unexcused absences

- **Frequency**: Most of the jail sites are offering PIO twice a week. This is frequent enough to get participants to complete program lessons, but also process the information. One of the sites is offering PIO once per week; this site includes only a post-adjudicated population.

- **Legal custody**: Across the board-participating jails have not required legal custody or biological parent or grandparent status, recognizing the fluidity of family structures and child-relationships, especially for those connected to the justice system. Jails are supporting anyone with a significant relationship with a child.

- **Priority populations**: While none of the sites were at capacity, many noted populations that they would prioritize if they reached capacity, including those with custody of young children prior to arrest.

- **Preparation time**: On average facilitators needed 20 hours of preparation time after the PIO training to implement the course, with a range from 3-60 hours.

- **Co-facilitators**: Three of the 8 jail cohorts had a co-facilitator. Many have not had the capacity to support co-facilitators but would welcome it if it was feasible.

> *"Many of the families involved connect with multiple county systems, sometimes resulting in millions of dollars in program costs. So, if there is benefit from even one class, we feel it's worth the cost of our staff time to invest in this program."*
> *-Jail Administrator, Stearns County*

Recruiting Incarcerated Parent Participation

Jail used various strategies to promote participation. Jails have used multiple steps to recruit and inform parents about PIO. Examples are listed below.

- **Intake Screening:** Jails begin to identify potential participants at the intake screening, which includes questions about parent status and interest in parent education.

- **Orientation**: Additional information is provided about PIO at an orientation. Jails implemented an orientation to help ensure participants were interested, engaged, and committed to staying in the program.

- **Flyers**: Post a flyer and information about PIO on the tablets that every person in jail has available to them.

- **Videos**: Currently exploring opportunity to post PIO videos on the tablets, to give incarcerated parents and caregivers a flavor for what this looks like.

- **Voluntary**: There is a commitment to keeping PIO voluntary to facilitate authentic engagement and learning and creates an effective learning environment.

Connecting Parents to Community PIO

The structure of community PIO continues to take shape. Jails have a variety of community partners to help offer PIO to co-parents, parents who are released from jail or prison including: early childhood family education staff, public health family home visiting, public health nurses, child welfare, restorative justice partners, and child welfare.

The following are some examples of jail and community practices that support community PIO:

- **Warm handoff:** Jail community liaisons provide a warm handoff to community partners.

- **Share contact information:** Jails provide contact information directly to community partner to reach out to the parent directly.

- **Community outreach**: Provide-outreach to community partners to encourage them to refer parents to the community PIO through: Facebook posts, survey at a parent support group, presentations to CHIPS, probation and other organizations.

- **Co-parents:** Jail staff encourage participants co-parents to take the classes in the community.

- **Providing individual family support:** Some community partners offer course materials to an individual family if there are not enough people for a group, or if it better fits the family needs or schedule.

- **Release of Information:** Some jails asked participants to sign a release form during orientation that allows the jail to share information with the community partner to facilitate participation in community PIO if they leave jail before completing the course.

- **Individual Options:** Community PIO is being offered individually to one family at a time when a group setting is not an option or preference.

Steps to orient jails and community partners to PIO

Jails took a variety of steps to introduce this to the jail and community such as:

- Stearns County Jail staff provided an overview of PIO, including a demonstration of one of the modules. This strengthened administration support and promoted staff awareness and comfort with the course so they could actively encourage participation.

- Carlton County staff met with probation and child protection county staff to introduce PIO and let them know it was being offered in the jail. They invited probation to include this in their re-entry plans and child protection to consider this for required parent education.

- Sherburne County Jail emailed facility staff to describe the course and posted a memo of the day to notify incarcerated persons.

PIO Evaluation

- Incarcerated parents complete a questionnaire when they start and end of the PIO course, that includes questions about their relationship with each of their children, contact with their children, and their experiences in the course.

- During and after the lessons, homework assignments are used to evaluate their understanding of the curriculum and the students' overall performance.

Some things we have learned

- Engage people in the training who are interested and available to facilitate the courses.

- Prepare jail leadership about the additional preparation time needed after the training.

- Offer two sessions per week to allow more people the opportunity to complete the program before they leave jail.

- Provide orientation to jail staff to help engage them and understand the program, invite them to encourage participation.

- Connect with others who have implemented PIO, through the PIO Users group this MDH is supporting or directly with other facilitators 1:1.

Additional information?

If your county jail or community organization is interested in implementing PIO contact MDH to get more information or you can reach out directly to:

Pathfinders of Oregon
[Implenting Parenting Inside Out (http://www.parentinginsideout.org/implementing-parenting-inside-out/)](http://www.parentinginsideout.org/implementing-parenting-inside-out/)
PIO@thepathfindernetwork.org
971-806-0032

A 12-hour facilitator training is required for every PIO facilitator, which typically occurs over three-month period. If there are enough interested participants, additional MN Cohorts can be arranged to provide the training in three consecutive days. There is also a one-time facility license fee required that covers anyone supporting that facility.

PIO Users Group
A Minnesota PIO Users group began to meet quarterly starting in 2022. All are welcome to join. Reach out to MDH for more information.

Minnesota Department of Health
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[i] Center for the Study of Social Policy, Strengthening Families Framework