

# parenting **inside** out®

## Improving Outcomes for Parents, Children and Communities



54% of inmates are parents with minor children (ages 0-17). 2.7 million children (1 in 28) have a parent behind bars (Pew Charitable Trusts, *The Collateral Costs of Incarceration*, 2010), and research has shown that “parental incarceration is related to a variety of adverse child outcomes, including emotional or psychological problems and school difficulties.” (Dr. J. Mark Eddy, Ph.D, Partners for Our Children, University of Washington School of Social Work).

“[T]he single most important factor to ameliorate the harmful impacts of parental incarceration is the parent/child relationship itself.” (Raimon, Lee & Gentry, *Sometimes Good Intentions Yield Bad Results: ASFA’s Effect on Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, 2009).

93% of inmates will be released and research has also shown that those with strong family or community connections are more successful at reentry than are their peers who lack those connections (Holt & Miller, 1972).

Giving criminal justice involved parents the skills to successfully parent their children, and helping families become and stay connected helps parents succeed at reentry, strengthens children and improves public safety for our communities.



**Parenting Inside Out® is the leading evidence-based parenting program for criminal justice involved families.**

## Amy's Story

*Amy served two terms in prison. She has two children, both of whom had been raised by her mother. In a parent panel prior to her release Amy shared her experience with the Parenting Inside Out program.*

*"PIO helped me rebuild my family relationships, not just relationships with my children. I hated my mother, who is my children's caregiver. She has taken care of my children since they were born and I was never really their mother. She wouldn't bring my kids to see me. PIO gave me the skills to communicate with her and also the understanding of how to be a parent. Now my mom is my best friend and she brings my kids to see me all the time. My son is in the Early Head Start program. I spend two mornings a week in his class. I write to his teacher about his education and how he is doing. I never would have known how to do that before I took PIO. I didn't know how to be my children's champion and advocate.*

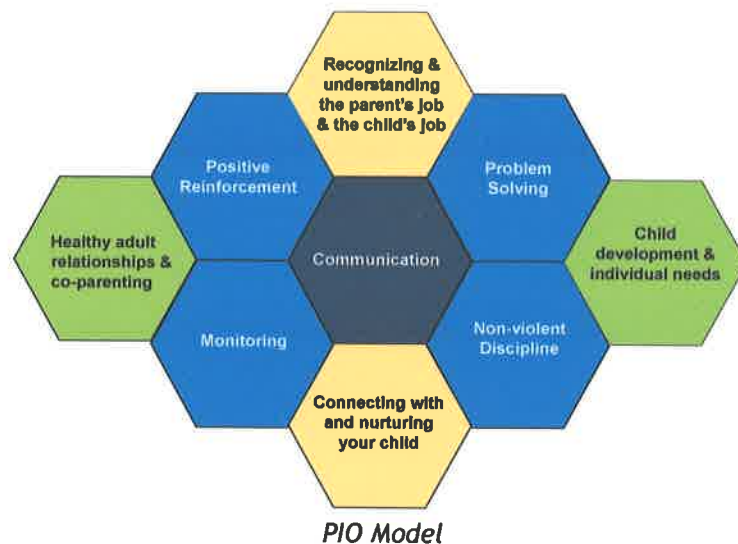
*"I had no confidence in myself. In PIO I accomplished something each week. Those little successes gave me the confidence to keep going; I was willing to try something bigger. Now I am part of my children's lives. I am their mom. When I go home my mom will still be important to my children, but she will be able to be their grandmother, not their substitute mom. They will have both of us."*

*Amy is now successfully parenting her children in the community.*

## The Parenting Inside Out® Curriculum

*Parenting Inside Out (PIO)* is an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral parent management skills training program created for incarcerated parents through a six-year collaboration of scientists, policy makers, practitioners, and instructional designers. Both the information in the program and the way that information is presented were informed by knowledge derived from research and practice. *PIO* appears on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). *PIO* is approved by the Oregon Department of Human Services for parents mandated to take a parenting program.

At the core of Parenting Inside Out is the *Parent Management Training (PMT)* curriculum, which appears on numerous national-level best practice lists, including those created by the American Psychological Assoc., the US Department of Health & Human Services, and the Office of Victims of Crime, the US Department of Justice. *PMT* includes communication, problem solving, monitoring, positive reinforcement and non-violent discipline techniques. Researchers built upon the *PMT* curriculum to make it effective within the context and restrictions of parents and families involved in the criminal justice system. In addition to the professionals who contributed to *PIO*, inmates and their families were extensively interviewed to ensure the program addressed the real needs and issues they experience.



*PIO* is an outcomes-based, developmentally-focused program that helps parents promote healthy child adjustment, prevent child problem behavior, and interrupt a cycle of intergenerational criminality. During the *PIO* program parents develop and refine social interactional skills and citizenship behaviors they can use in all aspects of their lives and that will help them guide their children toward becoming positive, constructive adults.

*PIO* consists of classroom time involving learner-centered interactive skill building in Parent Management Training that is ultimately individualized to

each parent's family. Parenting Coaches facilitate role-play practice, work individually with parents to create plans for child visits, are available to offer immediate coaching and guidance at child-centered events, and provide inmates feedback and problem solving after their visits or phone calls with the child or the child's caregiver. *PIO* teaches parents a way of navigating life that uses healthy, pro-social skills to interact with children, partners, co-parents, officials, friends and family. *PIO* values the uniqueness of each person and invites others into caring, respectful relationships. With *PIO* training, incarcerated parents can be good parents and positive role models in their children's lives.

There are three versions of the *PIO* curriculum: Prison, Jail, and Community. Each was developed to meet the specific needs of people parenting in these very different situations and to accommodate differences among the teaching environments. The Prison and Community versions of the curriculum offer more hours of instruction than the Jail version. The Jail version is appropriate when the parent will be incarcerated for only a short time.

## Research

*PIO* was the subject of a five year, \$2.1 million, randomized controlled study of 359 incarcerated mothers and fathers (41% racial and ethnic minority) funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. Among the results were the following:

- At one year post release, *PIO* participants had a 26% (men) to 48% (women) reduction in rearrest when compared to the control group.
- At one year post release, *PIO* participants had a 95% reduction in self-reported criminal behavior when compared to the control group.
- At one year post release, *PIO* participants had a 66% reduction in self-reported substance abuse when compared to the control group.
- *PIO* participants had significantly higher positive prison attitude scores following their *PIO* class than did the control group.
- During incarceration, the *PIO* group reported significantly more Positive Parent-Child Contact (phone calls, letters, visits) and had a higher score on the Parent Ease of Relationship with Caregiver measurement at the end of their *PIO* class than did the control group.
- *PIO* participants had more visits from children and families during their incarceration and were more likely to have an active role parenting their children than the control group.
- *PIO* participants had significantly lower depression (on the CES-D) following their *PIO* class than did the control group.
- *PIO* participants had significantly lower parental stress scores following their *PIO* class than they had before the class, and significantly lower scores than non-participants.
- After release from prison, *PIO* fathers used significantly more positive reinforcement with their children than did non-*PIO* fathers and *PIO* participants reported less use of poor discipline practices.



"It is the first time any program has had the ability to change the culture of a facility. It allowed staff to engage with offenders differently and offenders to use the skills - all the skills are transferable - to problem solve and communicate in a different way with staff and with each other."

Lory Humbert  
Asst. Superintendent  
Coffee Creek  
Correctional Facility





## Parenting Coach Training

The *Parenting Inside Out* curriculum was designed and written based on the proven *Parent Management Training* program, and upon research into the needs and issues of incarcerated parents. It delivers the best results when it is taught as designed. Pathfinders of Oregon provides training for all parenting coaches, and for the lead coaches who supervise them, to ensure they are well prepared to deliver the curriculum as designed.

Training is available in person and via webinar. Quarterly web-based conferences are available to trained coaches in which new information is shared and questions or problems can be addressed.

We are committed to the success of parents and the coaches who serve them. We will continue to seek and provide information and training to improve outcomes for criminal justice involved parents and their families.

For more information contact:

Children's Justice Alliance/  
Pathfinders of Oregon

503.977.6399

[www.parentinginsideout.org](http://www.parentinginsideout.org)

[www.pathfindersoforegon.org](http://www.pathfindersoforegon.org)

## Instructional Base

Most research-based parent training programs have been developed by scientist-practitioners with training in clinical psychology or a closely related field. *PIO* was developed by scientist-practitioners in close partnership not only with practitioners working in the field, but also with professionals with training and experience in instructional design and curriculum development.

**Adult Learning Theory.** *Parenting Inside Out* is grounded in adult learning theory and is designed specifically for the adult learner. *PIO* focuses on real-life, problem-oriented topics, skills training, and cooperative learning processes in which adult learners are encouraged to share and receive from the rich pool of knowledge and experiences each learner brings to the classroom. These processes include large and small group discussions of case studies, critical incident analysis, role-play practice, team projects, and collaborative peer review.

**Learner-Centered.** *PIO* employs a learner-centered design. This means that throughout the program, the parent educator, or "coach," and learner collaborate in the development of learning goals and methods for attaining those goals. A collaborative mode of instruction reduces attrition, lowers learner resistance, and increases motivation, communication, and transfer of learning. Researchers have found that a learner-centered teaching style is more effective in raising achievement levels than an educator-center teaching style, regardless of the subject area being taught.

**Outcomes-Based Instructional Design.** Outcomes-based models of instruction, as opposed to content-based or competency-based models, focus on problem-centered, real-life adult roles rather than factual knowledge or discrete skills learning. *PIO* utilizes an outcomes-based design because adult learners tend to be most interested in solving problems that relate to day-to-day life. The learning activities of *PIO* are designed to enhance functioning within the real-life community roles of pro-social parent, employee, citizen, and life-long learner.





## ***Parenting Inside Out*<sup>®</sup> as a Trauma Informed Program**

*Parenting Inside Out (PIO)* is an evidence based program developed specifically for the justice and systems involved parent population. This population has both experienced high levels of trauma and, in many cases, been responsible for inflicting trauma on their children. The underlying philosophy and structure of *PIO* are trauma informed and seek to give parents and children the support needed to heal.

The definition of trauma informed services used to evaluate *PIO* is as follows:

- Eliminate practices that have the potential to re-victimize
- Collaborate in all aspects of treatment
- Provide needed emotional and practical support to facilitate recovery
- Maximize choice and consumer control
- Emphasize consumer strengths
- Acknowledge and respect the role of culture

*PIO* is a learner-centered, strengths-based program that profoundly respects the knowledge and experience every parent brings to the classroom. In many cases, parents who take *PIO* have been told by multiple systems that they are bad parents and that they have little or nothing to offer their children. *PIO* starts from the premise that parents want what is best for their children and that they have the potential to parent well whether they are incarcerated or living in the community. The emphasis is on creating a vision for the type of family interaction and values the parent wants for themselves and their children; developing parenting goals and strategies for achieving those goals; practicing the skills needed to realize their vision; and evaluating what worked, what didn't and what adjustments are needed to keep moving forward.

Throughout the *PIO* program parents are exposed to healthy ways to interact with their children, their children's caregiver and others in their children's lives. Communication skills, problem solving skills, positive reinforcement and nonviolent discipline practices are core elements of the program.

It is emblematic of the collaborative design of the program that facilitators are called Parenting Coaches. Coaches do not "teach" parents the "right" way to parent, nor do they castigate parents for parenting the "wrong" way. Rather, they work with parents individually and in groups to explore alternative parenting skills and to help parents develop parenting strategies that work within their culture and the environment of their individual families. Through empowering parents to support one another on the parenting journey, *PIO* creates a caring community for people who may never have experienced one before. As parents are treated in the *PIO* program, so they also learn to treat their children.

At the same time that *PIO* respects every parent, it also works with parents to acknowledge the trauma their children may have suffered in experiencing or witnessing violence, witnessing parental arrest, and being separated from the parent. *PIO* gives parents the skills to support their children emotionally, physically and spiritually, while being accountable for the role they played in their children's trauma. Parents are led to understand that rebuilding a family is a long term process and that their children have needs and rights that must be considered.

*PIO* addresses both children's trauma and parents' trauma while helping families to rebuild relationships and create a healthy environment for all.



Children's  
Justice Alliance

A program of  
Pathfinders of Oregon

## ***Parenting Inside Out***® and Criminogenic Risk Factors

*Parenting Inside Out (PIO)* is an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral parenting skills training program based on the Oregon Social Learning Center's *Parent Management Training* program for at risk families, which appears on numerous national-level best practice lists. *PIO* has been reviewed by SAMHSA and is now included on its National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). *PIO* is available in both English and Spanish.

After a nationwide search that revealed that no parenting skills program existed for this population, the Oregon Department of Corrections, the Oregon Social Learning Center and Pathfinders of Oregon partnered to develop one. It is the only parenting program developed specifically for incarcerated and criminal justice involved parents. What makes *Parenting Inside Out* different is that it is based on cognitive behavioral and social learning theory—proven methodologies for creating change with criminal justice involved persons.

At the core of *PIO* is the *Parent Management Training (PMT)* curriculum, which was developed for families whose children's behavior put them at high risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. *PMT* includes communication, problem solving, monitoring, positive reinforcement and non-violent discipline techniques. *PIO* builds upon the *PMT* curriculum to make it effective within the context and restrictions of parents and families that are already involved in the criminal justice system. For example, *PIO* addresses three of the six criminogenic risk factors in the context of developing parenting skills.

### ***Dysfunctional family ties***

*PIO* addresses the characteristics of healthy adult relationships and teaches criminal justice involved parents skills for developing those relationships. Criminal justice involved parents who have had little or no contact with their children or their children's caregivers learn to communicate respectfully and frequently are able to reestablish contact through letters, phone calls and visits.

### ***Low self-control***

*PIO* teaches a technique called emotion regulation for use in calming down before reacting or responding to charged situations. When facing a potentially volatile situation, parents create communications plans and role play conversations in advance. Practicing how to behave in difficult situations before they occur gives parents emotional and practical skills that help them keep their goals in mind and work calmly toward solutions that serve the needs of all concerned.

### ***Criminal personality***

The criminal personality sees events as external forces rather than as the result of one's choices and actions. *PIO* teaches parents to think ahead about their actions and about what they want to have happen. It stresses accountability for one's actions and provides a safe place for parents to examine their actions and the outcomes those actions produced.

*PIO* is an outcomes-based, developmentally-focused program that helps parents promote healthy child adjustment, prevent child problem behavior, and interrupt a cycle of intergenerational criminality. Skills are applicable for parenting children of any age. During the *PIO* program parents develop and refine social interactional skills and citizenship behaviors they can use in all aspects of their lives and that will help them guide their children toward becoming positive, constructive adults.