

Cost of Raising a Child Module Evaluation

November 2025

Overview

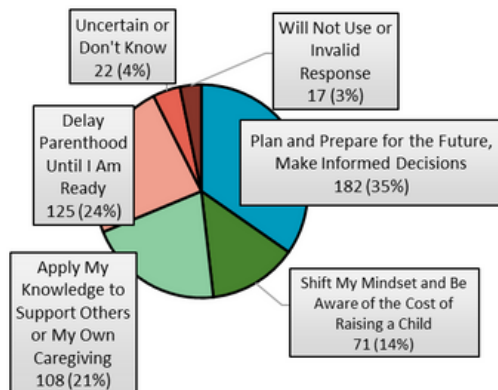
Using a prevention science framework, Preparing Individuals for Adulthood and Life (PIAL) is a comprehensive life skills program aimed at educating middle and high school students about the emotional, social, and financial aspects of parenting and relationships. PIAL delivers several unique modules that cover life skills, including (1) Healthy Relationships, (2) Cost of Raising a Child, (3) Resiliency, (4) Mental Health, and (5) Career Readiness. The current report focuses on the [Cost of Raising a Child](#) module.

The Cost of Raising a Child module was administered during the 2024-2025 academic year. The module content and delivery were similar to prior years and included updated surveys. Students completed a pre-survey ($n = 398$) before attending the module and a post-survey ($n = 416$) after attending the module. Overall, 347 identifiable students completed both the pre-survey and post-survey. Their responses were matched and allowed analysis of knowledge change across surveys.

How does the Cost of Raising a Child module impact students?

On the post-survey, participating youth answered “How will you use what you’ve learned about the cost of raising a child in the future?” ($n = 410$)
Six unique themes emerged across the open-ended responses.

“How will you use what you’ve learned about the cost of raising a child in the future?”



“Not to have kids till I'm financially, mentally, physical ready for children”

Delay parenthood until I am ready

“Keeping in mind that there is a lot more [expenses] than I previously thought”

Shift my mindset and be aware of the cost of raising a child

“being more careful in the [decisions] I make”

Plan and prepare for the future, make informed decisions

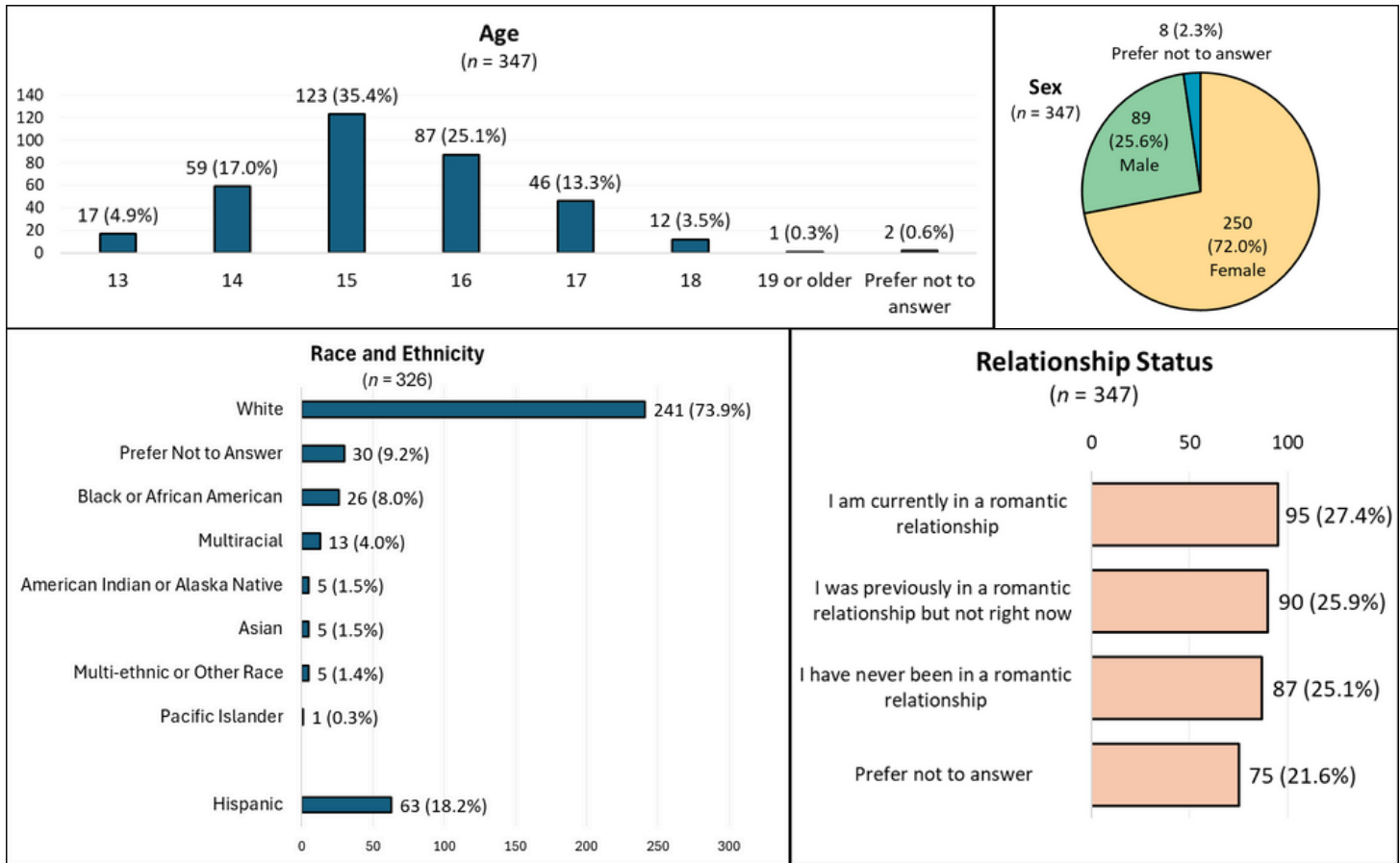
At the end of the post-survey, we asked students to “Rate your overall experience going through the Cost of Raising a Child module.” Of all students who provided a response ($n = 413$), students overwhelmingly had a positive experience.

89%

of students rated the Cost of Raising a Child module as Excellent/Good

1 Who participated in the Cost of Raising a Child module?

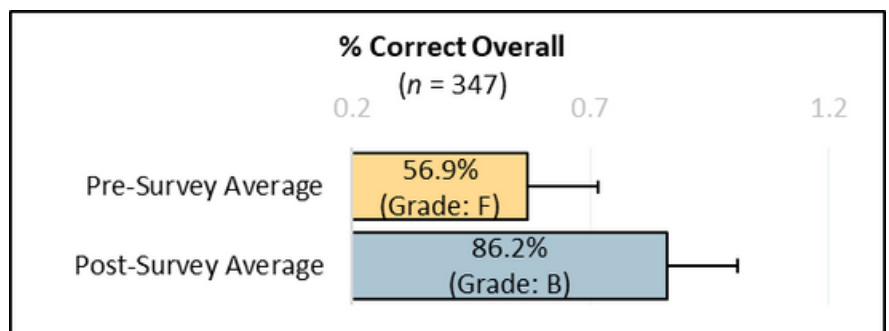
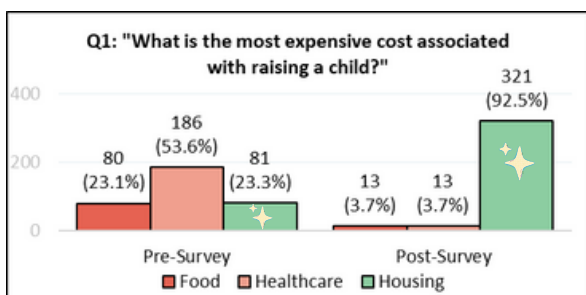
Demographic data were calculated based on responses to the matched pre- and post-surveys ($n = 347$) and are displayed in the figures below. Youth were predominantly white, majority aged 15, and mostly female.



*Twenty one youth (6.1%) were missing race information.

2 How did students' knowledge of the cost of raising a child change?

Various statistical tests were used to calculate the change in scores from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Findings suggest overall positive change in students' knowledge of the cost of raising a child. (See the long report for more details on statistical analyses and results)



✦ indicates correct response

3 Does the Cost of Raising a Child module teach students what they want to know?

Prior to attending the Cost of Raising a Child module, youth were asked what they would like to learn about the cost of raising a child on the pre-survey through an open-ended response. Using responses from all participating youth ($n = 398$), responses were categorized into 10 emerging themes. Youth may have provided a response that spanned across multiple themes. Most youth (78%) identified they wanted to learn about a specific concept, and 8% of youth did not know what they wanted to learn. While module facilitators are trained to accurately answer student questions in the classroom, the Cost of Raising a Child module curriculum covers all students' topics of interest.

"How much it costs yearly"

Cost over time

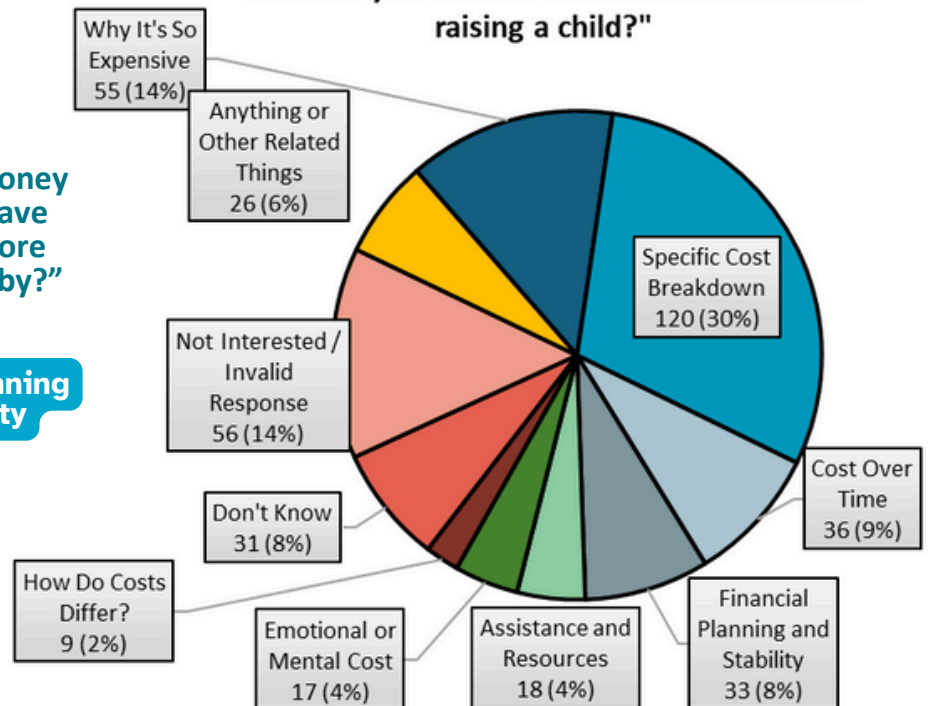
"How much money should you have saved up before you have a baby?"

Financial planning and stability

"How to get help."

Assistance and resources

"What do you want to learn about the cost of raising a child?"



4 Conclusions and Future Directions

Nearly all students (89%) expressed positive experiences with the module, noting that it deepened their understanding of the cost of raising a child and provided them with practical tools and insight they intend to use in their personal lives. When their knowledge of the cost of raising a child was assessed, participating students demonstrated overall improvement. The evaluation of the Cost of Raising a Child module highlights the need for assessment questions that can better capture the nuances of the module's impact. To address this, we are currently working on developing enhanced assessment tools that will be more effective in measuring the program's influence on students' learning.

To read the long report and to learn more about PIAL, visit <https://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/>