

PARENTING: IT'S A LIFE

EXPANSION GRANT OBJECTIVE 3

BRIEF REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2023

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
Health AND Human
SERVICES

OVERVIEW

The Parenting: It's a Life (PIAL) program has served Iowa middle and high school students for over 20 years and is designed to equip youth with life skills, knowledge, and application related to the realities of becoming a parent, such as establishing paternity, co-parenting, and child support through a free, relevant, and research-driven curriculum. In 2020, Iowa Child Support was one of eight state child support agencies awarded a three-year grant through the Federal Office of Child Support Services initiative, *Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting*. One of the grant objectives, Objective 3, was to expand PIAL to engage future teachers and human service professionals with the PIAL program to prepare them to implement PIAL components in their classrooms and organizations.

By exposing future teachers and human service professionals to the curriculum, we theorized this might increase the likelihood that the PIAL curriculum would be used in more schools and thereby reach more youth. We recognized that the current PIAL delivery model could not reach 300+ school districts in Iowa annually, serving over 200,000 middle and high school students. By engaging with and training future teachers and human service professionals, we are equipping them with tools to educate youth in their care. This sustainability strategy could expand PIAL curriculum's reach in Iowa. Building PIAL into the coursework requirements for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), Health, and Human Service majors at ISU would establish a consistent method for preparing future professionals to use the curriculum. Additionally, 18-25 year olds enrolled in this higher education class are increasing their knowledge related to the emotional, social, legal, and financial realities of parenting due to exposure to the PIAL curriculum.

AIMS

The aim of this brief report is to provide the findings from the data collected from the fall 2021 and fall 2022 pre-and post-assessments, which were completed by ISU students enrolled in *Educational Principles in Family and Consumer Science* (FCS 306). Using data collected from Year 1 (2021) (n = 10) and Year 2 (2022) (n = 17), this brief report presents results on the following: 1) plans to use PIAL in the future, 2) module knowledge gain, and 3) family-related future plans.

Additionally, this brief report provides access to the full report with additional results (such as demographics, students' reported experiences with the PIAL modules, and students' reported experiences with the PIAL teaching method), and related PIAL resources.

PROCEDURES

Three PIAL instructors provided training on the PIAL program to undergraduate students. The research team developed a pre-and post-comprehensive assessment to assess students' demographic information, plans to use PIAL modules in their careers, PIAL module knowledge, and training experiences. The pre-assessment was delivered in the first week of class and the post-assessment was delivered in the final week of class.

PLANS TO USE PIAL IN THE FUTURE (YEAR 1)

Figure 1 shows the information students shared about their experience regarding the training and their plans to use the PIAL curriculum in their future careers. The assessment included five statements that inquired about students' plans to use the PIAL program in the future. Students were asked to mark their agreement on a 4-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There was strong agreement (mean = 1.30, SD = 0.675) toward the statement about receiving adequate instruction and feedback to present the PIAL curriculum. Similarly, most students agreed (mean = 1.20, SD = 0.422) that "presenting a PIAL module as a component of the FCS 306 course was beneficial."

Plans to use PIAL in the future (Year 1, $n = 10$)

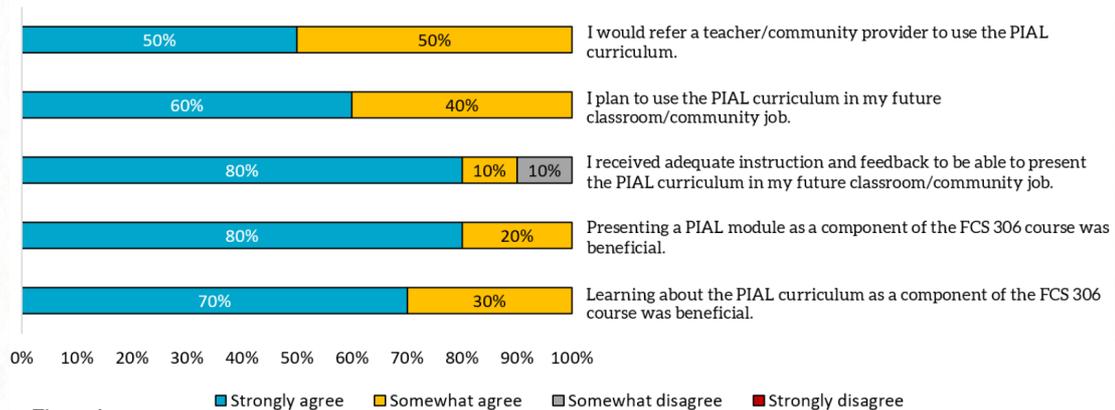


Figure 1.

MODULE KNOWLEDGE GAIN (YEAR 1)

The Cost of Raising a Child and Establishing Paternity modules showed significant knowledge change from the pre- to post-assessments ($p < .05$) (Figures 2 & 3). The remaining modules showed high pre-knowledge in the module content, therefore not leading to a significant knowledge increase between pre- and post-module assessment.

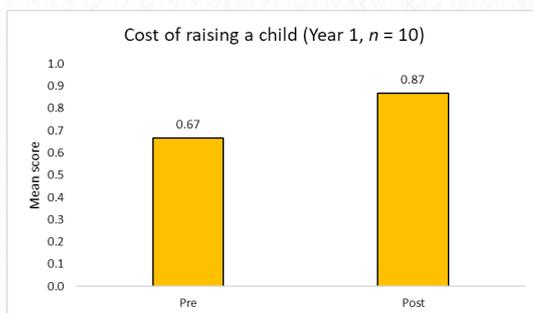


Figure 2.

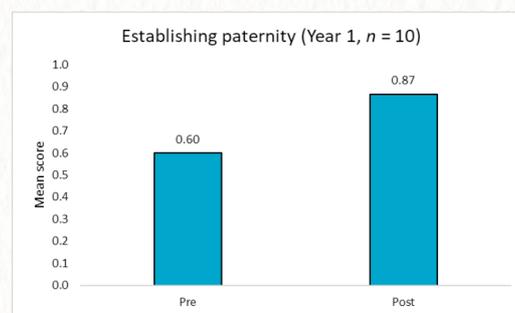


Figure 3.

FAMILY-RELATED FUTURE PLANS (YEAR 1)

Figures 4 and 5 below display the students' family-related future plans indicated in the pre- and post-assessments. These changes were nonsignificant ($p > .05$) between pre- and post-assessment. In other words, participating in the PIAL training did not affect the age students plan to marry or have their first child.

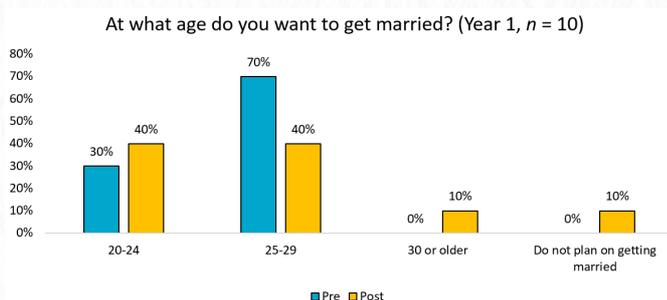


Figure 4.

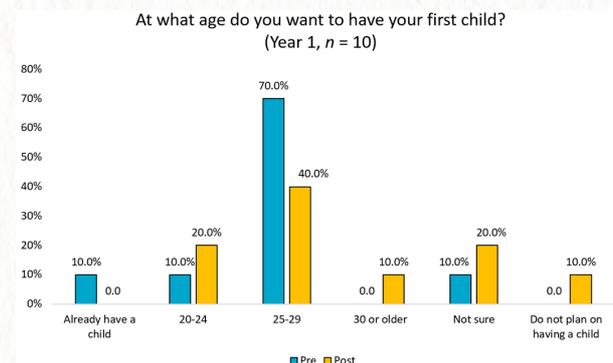


Figure 5.

PLANS TO USE PIAL IN THE FUTURE (YEAR 2)

Figure 6 shows the information students shared about their experience regarding the training and their plans to use the PIAL curriculum in their future careers. There was agreement (mean = 1.56, SD = 0.56) with the statement about “learning about the PIAL curriculum as part of their class was beneficial.” Similarly, most students somewhat agreed (mean = 1.56, SD = 0.56) with the statement, “presenting a PIAL module as a component of their course was beneficial.” Around 64.7% of students seemed to somewhat agree (mean = 1.76, SD = 0.74) that they will use the PIAL curriculum in their future careers.

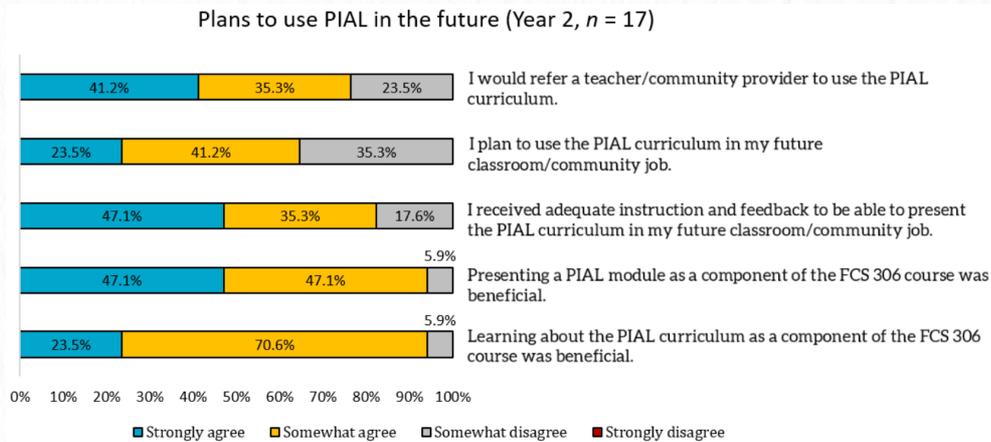


Figure 6.

MODULE KNOWLEDGE GAIN (YEAR 2)

The Cost of Raising a Child module showed a significant increase in knowledge from the pre- to post-assessments ($p < .05$) (Figure 7). In most cases, the rest of the modules showed high pre-knowledge in the module content, thus not leading to a significant knowledge increase between the pre- and post-assessment.

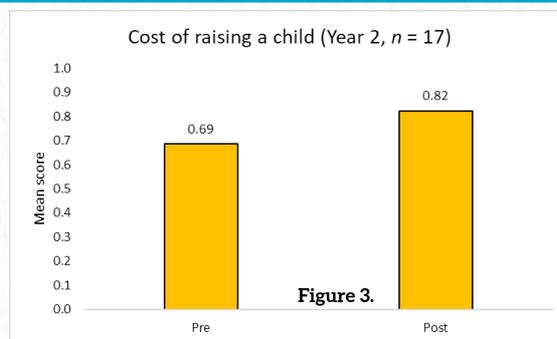


Figure 7.

FAMILY-RELATED FUTURE PLANS (YEAR 2)

Figures 8 and 9 below display the students' family-related future plans indicated in the pre- and post-assessments. These changes were nonsignificant ($p > .05$) between pre- and post-assessment. In other words, participating in the PIAL training did not affect the age students plan to marry or have their first child.

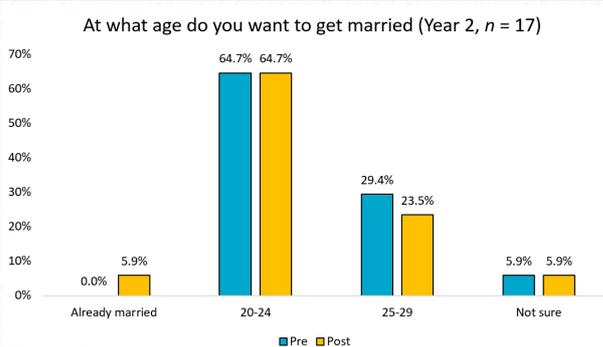


Figure 8.

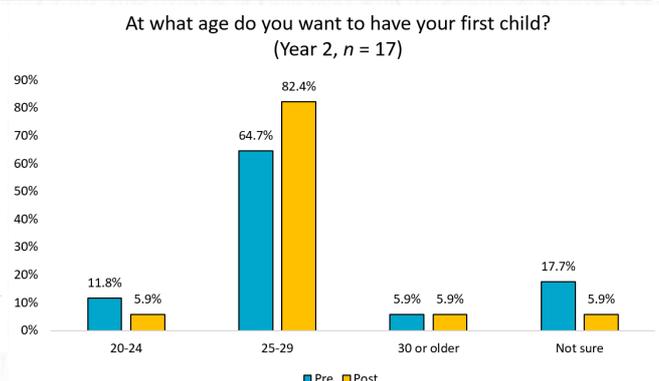


Figure 9.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION RESULTS (YEARS 1 & 2)

This research study provided an opportunity for college students to learn about PIAL and various teaching strategies to use when implementing the curriculum. The data collected from the two years showed that students felt the life skills topics covered were important for youth to hear. When these students start their careers post-graduation, they may be more inclined to use the PIAL curriculum, since they have been exposed to it during FCS 306. From the survey results, students felt their training was adequate and plan to use the PIAL modules. It is important to highlight the Establishing Paternity and Child Support modules play a unique role in the curriculum, as they are emerging as the two modules that these future educators learned from the most. It is safe to say that the novelty of the topic and content led to these significant knowledge changes, while for most other modules, the student's pre-existing knowledge was high. Future educators may need more resources and knowledge about the cost of raising a child and establishing paternity to confidently present these topics to youth in their communities.

Important to note is that this study only included 10 participants the first academic year and 17 the second academic year. To understand the impact the PIAL program has on students who take FCS 306, additional participant data needs to be collected in future semesters. This study only included one class from one university. To understand the impact the PIAL program has on future educators, broader use of PIAL in other pertinent classes at other higher education institutions needs to happen.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

The collaboration led to the creation of several materials that can be utilized for future partnerships. These materials are directly related to the course assignments and activities students will do throughout the course. Use the following QR code to access the full documents/tools listed below.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO ACCESS THE PUBLIC FOLDER TO VIEW THE FULL REPORT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS.

SAMPLES OF RESOURCES

Parenting; It's a Life Syllabus

Main Instructor:
Van Waardhuizen, Laura
1362 Palmer
315-294-5652
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PIAL Instructor:
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Program Coordinator
Parenting: It's a Life
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Description

Parenting it's a life (PIAL) is a program equips youth and emerging adults with life skills and introduces them to the emotional, social, and financial realities of being a parent by providing a free, relevant, and research-driven curriculum to schools, colleges, and youth-serving agencies. The PIAL program has built a partnership with your main instructor in this course where future teachers and human service professionals like you will be trained implement PIAL components in their classrooms and organizations. In this training you will get familiar with the curriculum, and program, get experience in facilitating the parts of the curriculum, receive and provide constructive feedback, and understand different instructional strategies used thought the curriculum.

Rationale

The PIAL program is a well-established community outreach project based in Iowa State University. Project is a collaboration between Iowa State University, Department of Human Services, and Iowa District Attorney's office. The project is a partnership between Iowa State University, the Iowa Department of Human Services Child Support Recovery Unit, and the Office of the Iowa Attorney General. Project is house under Child Welfare Research and Training Project (CWRTP).

PowerPoint Slides



Introduction to Parenting: It's a Life presentation



Colors personality presentation

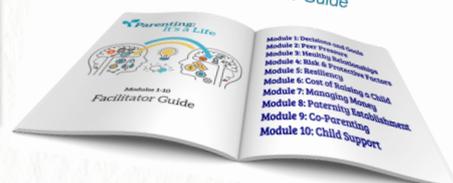


Adverse childhood experience presentation



Giving feedback presentation

PIAL Facilitator Guide



Module 1: Developmental Stages
Module 2: Parent Personality
Module 3: Health and Nutrition
Module 4: Risk & Protective Factors
Module 5: Resilience Factors
Module 6: Cost of Raising a Child
Module 7: Managing Money
Module 8: Parenting Establishment
Module 9: Co-Parenting
Module 10: Child Support