

Parenting:
It's a Life

PIAL Objective 2

Expand the PIAL curriculum to serve young adults, ages 18-25, in community college settings

Program Evaluation and Toolkit

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Health and
Human Services

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Introduction

How It Started

In 2020, Iowa Child Support received funding from the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) for the Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting three-year grant. Iowa Child Support subcontracted with Iowa State University to provide all the programming and data analysis to complete the objectives outlined in the grant proposal. One of the grant objectives, Objective 2, was to expand the PIAL curriculum to serve young adults (18-25 years old) in community college settings. With this grant funding, the Parenting: It's a Life (PIAL) team created PIAL: Emerging Adult Edition. The PIAL: Emerging Adult Edition consists of three initiatives that align with the grant proposal. These include the College Simulation (College Sim), Emerging Adult Curriculum (EAC), and a Peer-to-Peer digital campaign. The report summarizes each initiative. Next, it describes the process details to implement each and the evaluation results.

College Simulation Pilot

In fall 2021, PIAL piloted a program, PIAL College Sim, at community colleges in Iowa. The College Sim provided an immersive experience of what it would be like to be a parent and college student simultaneously. College students were assigned different characters, each with unique stories. During the College Sim, individuals walked through life as if they were those characters.

Four sessions, each six-to-ten-minutes long, simulated the four semesters required to graduate with an associate's degree from a community college. Each session presented new obstacles. Students (role-playing as one of six characters) went around a room with multiple

tables (human services, childcare, health, college, work, class, and personal) while completing various tasks at each table. Each character had a specific schedule they needed to follow and an additional three cards (Chance Cards) to complete before the semester ended. The brief and long reports from fiscal years (FY) 22 and 23 can be found [here](#)¹.

Emerging Adult Curriculum (EAC) Pilot

In the summer of 2022, PIAL piloted the EAC at the Young Parents Together (YPT) program in Waterloo, Iowa. This curriculum comprised five modules (Healthy Relationships, Economic Mobility and Stability, Co-Parenting, Paternity Establishment, and Child Support). These modules were modeled after the original PIAL curriculum designed for grades 7-12, but these topics were discussed in a way more suited for the emerging adult age range (18-25).

Peer-to-Peer

A Peer-to-Peer digital campaign was initiated to connect young parents and amplify their voices. To reach young parents, focus groups were gathered on Iowa State University's campus and in Waterloo at the Young Parents Together Program to learn more about what young parents wish to see on social media. Image is an example of a flyer used to recruit young parents for the peer-to-peer digital campaign. Among the top content topics young parents valued were realistic



MAKE MONEY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

IS YOUR PASSION EMPOWERING OTHER YOUNG PARENTS? DO YOU WANT TO MAKE MONEY CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS?

THE BASICS

Parenting: It's a Life (PIAL) is looking for parents between the ages of 18-24 to make video posts for our social media accounts.

The PIAL team will review your video posts, edit as needed to meet our program standards, and let you know which ones have been selected for posting.

Videos will be credited to you by first name, and you are not prevented from using the videos on your own social media accounts.

You can participate even if you haven't used social media in the past.

PIAL is an outreach program at Iowa State University that provides life skills to youth and emerging adults.

WHAT YOU GET

If 5 of your social media posts/videos are selected, you'll get a \$50 gift card! We'll use up to 10 posts you send us, so you can make up to \$100!

TYPES OF POSTS:

- Daily parenting life and funny parenting stories
- Developmental stages
- Parenting life hacks
- Nutrition
- Handling parenting stress
- What you wish you could see as a young parent

EMAIL US TO GET STARTED
PIAL@IASTATE.EDU

Before you start, the PIAL team requires a quick virtual call so we can go over program requirements and answer questions.



¹ <https://go.iastate.edu/BRU5J7>

parenting, content showing the difficult things about being a young parent, and content showing parenting as part of someone's life but not the entirety. PIAL staff used this feedback to research relevant social media trends to provide what young parents wished to see.

College Simulation

The College Simulation (College Sim) was piloted in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) by contacting two community colleges in Iowa. These community colleges were specifically chosen due to being local (under two-hour drive time from the Iowa State campus) and PIAL staff having personal connections. Based on this, PIAL moved forward and connected with Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) in Fort Dodge, Iowa, and Southwestern Community College (SWCC) in Creston, Iowa. Knowing that the College Sim required many volunteers and intensive logistics, this coordination started several months before the desired launch time of fall 2021 (FY22). The Project Coordinator contacted individuals in academic advising, administration, and instruction regarding the pilot of the College Sim.

The Pitch

The initial pitch for the College Sim was organized in a PowerPoint that outlined the logistics of the simulation, showed the materials used, and gave suggestions for which classes might benefit from this experience. Due to distance and COVID-19, the project coordinator organized virtual meetings with each community college individually, allowing people present in the meeting to ask questions and make comments specific to their college. With resourcefulness, continued discussions and persistence, the project coordinator scheduled over a dozen simulations between the two community colleges for the program's first year.

Classes and Volunteers

After these meetings, it was decided that the College Sim would be piloted in "Intro to College" courses. These courses introduced students to resources at the college along with other important topics as they start a new chapter of their life. Both community colleges offered this course, which was required for students and primarily comprised of first-year college students. During the initial pilot year, each class was 90 minutes, giving ample time for students to hear instructions, walk through the simulation, and debrief after the simulation in both small and large groups.

After it was decided which classes would receive the College Sim, the Project Coordinator contacted various college personnel asking them to volunteer. They specifically asked for someone from Financial Aid to work at the College table or the instructor of the class to work at the class table. In addition to volunteers from the college, PIAL also hoped to have volunteers from the community serve as subject matter experts. Contacting community agencies was more difficult than expected, especially since the College Sims were already scheduled. Based on this, the Project Coordinator and the rest of PIAL Leadership looked internally for professionals to serve as table monitors in FY22.

With the help of the Contract Supervisor, internal Iowa State University employees were asked to sign up to volunteer for the College Sim if it fit their schedule. Once this information was gathered, the Project Coordinator matched individuals to the table that would best match their professional and personal skills. These volunteers were given further information regarding the College Sim and their roles as table monitors. They also received a detailed

schedule, including when the carpool would leave Iowa State University and the expected return time.

Before each simulation, table monitors experienced a short orientation where they learned more about the table materials and asked questions. During the first year, volunteers were also asked to fill out a short survey after the College Sim to provide general feedback and feedback on different components (Tables, Chance Cards, General, etc.). In addition, each table had paper and pens for table leaders to write down questions or concerns during the simulation. These comments were collected and addressed, allowing for any initial issues to be resolved promptly.

FY23 College Simulation

In FY23, there was a new Project Coordinator for the College Sim. This individual was promoted from within the PIAL team and was already familiar with the College Sim. The new Project Coordinator followed a similar process when contacting individuals. The same community colleges from FY22 were contacted regarding the FY23 College Sim (ICCC and SWCC). The meetings had some of the same individuals from the previous year, and each community college had an internal process of discussing with supervisors and other administrators before moving forward. The Program Coordinator continued to follow up regarding scheduling for the fall of 2022. The PIAL team also wanted to try to connect with outside community members, requiring a concrete schedule to be in place.

With the new school year came an unexpected complication. Since COVID-19 restrictions were over, these introductory courses were switched back to one-hour class periods, meeting more frequently throughout the week. Knowing that the College Sim needed

over an hour to be completed, the Project Coordinator worked individually with ICCC and SWCC to find a solution.

Iowa Central Community College. The solution for ICCC was to have the College Sim during one session of the course that was offered one day a week from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. This time frame allowed for the College Sim to be completed in the intended form. This course had two sections, and scheduling those two times was not difficult.

Southwestern Community College. Scheduling around the new time frame proved more difficult for SWCC, as the college introduction courses were no more than 60 minutes. Because of this, the PIAL team made a significant pivot, creating an online debrief. This solution was pitched to representatives at SWCC. The online debrief would be completed by students on their own time after the College Sim or in their next class period. Once SWCC agreed, the PIAL team created the Online Debrief. More information about the Online Debrief can be found on page 38.

Community Representatives

Once the schedule was confirmed, it was time to contact community partners within the Creston and Fort Dodge communities. Some tables, such as the Health, Human Services, and College tables, had information better presented by subject matter experts. The Project Coordinator began to send emails to agencies in the area. The selling point for recruiting outside volunteers was the opportunity to connect with students and share information about their agency's resources. The nature of human service work can cause difficulty in availability and staffing, so it was necessary to be persistent and flexible when trying to schedule volunteers for the simulation.

Mental Health Representatives. Our team first contacted representatives to see if mental health services on both campuses would be interested in volunteering at the Health Table. With summer staffing and the need to respond to students' needs on campus, it was difficult for those representatives to find time to participate. This caused PIAL staff to contact community partners within the Creston and Fort Dodge communities. When continued issues with scheduling and response times persisted, PIAL decided that using phone calls instead of emails might help recruit volunteers. This tactic proved helpful as Crossroads Behavioral Health in Creston, Iowa, was excited to volunteer their time and resources. They provided one or more representatives at each simulation and had great insight into how mental health should be approached. Representatives also expressed interest in continuing to volunteer in the coming years.

Child Support. Connections were made with individuals from the local child support offices. Individuals from these offices volunteered their time to be Table Monitors at the Human Services Table. This was helpful as they are experts in establishing paternity and all things related to child support. They answered the participants' questions about these topics-- for the students' characters in the College Sim and for individual students in their own lives.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation of programming is essential while piloting any program. Information gathered ensures that participants have a positive experience and gain the intended knowledge. For further details regarding College Sim program evaluation, please look at reports created for FY22 and FY23 which can be found [here](https://go.iastate.edu/BRU5J7)².

² <https://go.iastate.edu/BRU5J7>

How-to Guide: College Simulation

The College Sim has multitude of moving parts. In these pages, you will find a detailed "how-to guide" for implementing the College Sim. This guide includes background on the characters, the different materials, and information regarding the tables that give out information during the College Sim. All PDFs are in a public access folder, PIAL: Objective 2 Toolkit, found [here](#)³. An additional guide that has detailed pictures and information can be found [here](#)⁴. Two reports have been written regarding the results of the program evaluation of the College Sim, along with a poster presented at a national conference.

The College Sim is made up of four simulated semesters; *Fall 1 (F1)*, *Spring 1 (S1)*, *Fall 2 (F2)*, and *Spring 2 (S2)*. These four simulated semesters imitate the four semesters that an individual typically spends to graduate with a two-year associate's degree. During each semester, individuals walk around the room playing an assigned character, going to work and classes, and learning about resources in their community if they had a child while in college. Some resources apply to them as college students, even if they are not parenting. The following guide will explain the ins and outs of the College Sim.

Characters

There are six characters that individuals can role play during the College Sim. Each character portrayed is a parent or about to become a parent and has their own unique story and goals they are working to accomplish. The simulation is designed for five students to role play per character (30 students total). If there are more than 30 students in a class, students can partner

³ <https://go.iastate.edu/21GLFH>

⁴ <https://go.iastate.edu/Q5JNRS>

together when they arrive. As students walk into the room, they are randomly assigned a diaper bag that has information pertaining to one of six characters.

Alona. Alona is 18 years old, majoring in professional music at a community college, and planning to become a band teacher. She has an 11-month-old son, Jonas. Alona is not currently romantically involved with Zach, Jonas's father, but Zach helps with parenting responsibilities. Jonas goes to childcare when he is with Alona. Alona hopes to find a tutoring job on campus but needs to ensure she has the grades to be a tutor. Alona has a positive relationship with her parents, and they live nearby.

Rudi. Rudi is 19 years old and is pregnant as she starts community college. She has her baby, Ava, while attending community college. Rudi originally went to Kansas State University but struggled with grades. She transferred to a community college near home to improve her grades and study habits. The community college is by the farm her family still operates, and because of this, Rudi majors in crop production. Rudi is employed at the family farm as she raises her baby. In exchange for working on the farm, Rudi's parents watch Ava. Rudi is no longer romantically involved with Ava's father, Elijah. Elijah still attends KSU and is involved with raising Ava.

Natalia. Natalia is 21 years old and just received her General Education Diploma. This is her first semester at a community college. Natalia is majoring in Criminal Justice. Natalia has twin girls, Grace and Isabella. They are two years old when she starts community college. Natalia has sole custody of Grace and Isabella; their father established paternity and pays child support but is not involved in their day-to-day lives. When Natalia works in the dining center, her parents watch Grace and Isabella.

Malik. Malik is 18 years old and attending community college to pursue an associate's degree in graphic design. Malik is the primary caretaker of his 6-month-old daughter, Imani, since Imani's mom moved to Colorado. Malik has not established paternity and does not receive child support. He works part-time at UPS after he finishes classes for the day. Malik's mom helps to care for Imani when she is not in daycare.

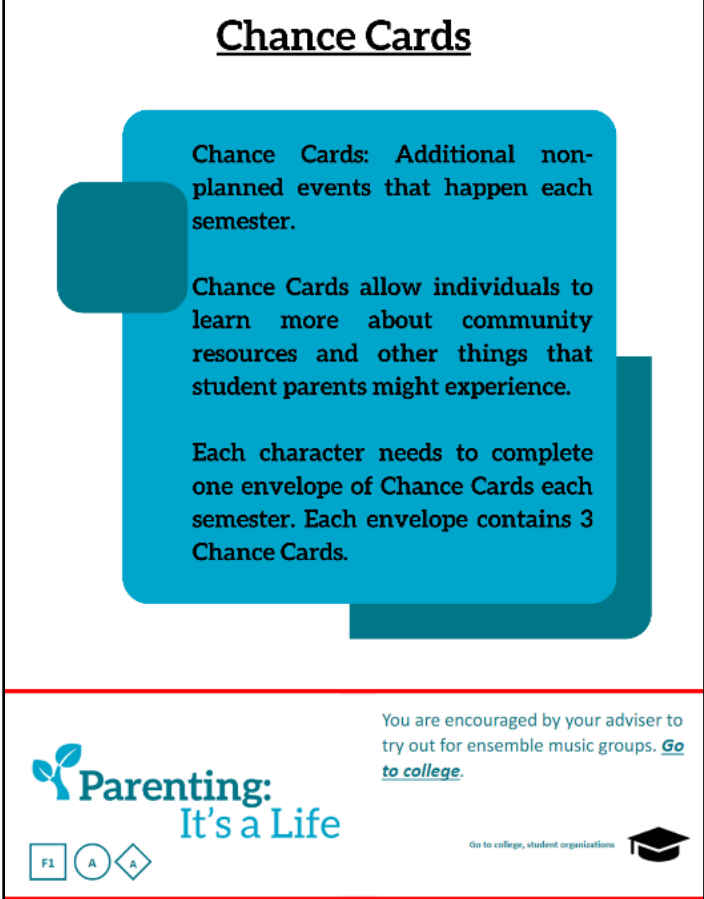
Kristen. Kristen has been a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for six years. She had her son, Miles, when she was a senior in high school. Now, Miles is in elementary school, and she is ready to pursue her RN degree. Kristen's partner Alex is involved with Miles' life. Mile's biological father signed a voluntary paternity affidavit and does not pay child support. While Miles does not need daily childcare because of his age, Kristen must figure out childcare occasionally. Kristen is worried about finances, but Alex supports her decision not to work and focus on school. Kristen has a strained relationship with her parents but is close with her brother, Ross.

Lucas. Lucas is 19 years old, took a year off before starting college, and hopes to be an emergency room doctor. Lucas's child will be born during his first semester of college. Lucas is not in a relationship with Sarah, the mother of his child, but they plan to co-parent. Lucas is involved with TRIO since he is the first person in his family to go to college. Lucas has the support of his parents, but they live about 30 minutes away.

Chance Cards

Chance Cards include more events that happen each semester to the characters (Figure 1). Each character has three chance cards per semester. These chance cards cover a variety of topics including *Establishing Paternity, Child Support, Dating, Finances, and Stress*. Each chance card is unique to the character and their specific storyline.

Chance Cards are organized by character, semester, and order. Chance




Chance Cards

Chance Cards: Additional non-planned events that happen each semester.

Chance Cards allow individuals to learn more about community resources and other things that student parents might experience.

Each character needs to complete one envelope of Chance Cards each semester. Each envelope contains 3 Chance Cards.

You are encouraged by your adviser to try out for ensemble music groups. [Go to college.](#)

Go to college, student organizations 




Figure 1. Chance Cards

Cards are note-card size, printed in color, and double-sided. Chance Cards should be laminated on thick card stock to ensure longevity. Chance Cards are stored in envelopes labeled with character, semester, and order. Information regarding all parts of the Chance Card and suggested printing size can be found [here](https://go.iastate.edu/Q5JNRS)⁵, in the Material Guide.

⁵ <https://go.iastate.edu/Q5JNRS>

Life Cards

Life Cards tell the story of each character. Life Cards are double-sided, labeled with character names and stock images to represent the character, and color-coded. Each character has its color indicated by a thin bar across the top which coordinates with Chance Card color. One side of the Life Card tells the character's story,

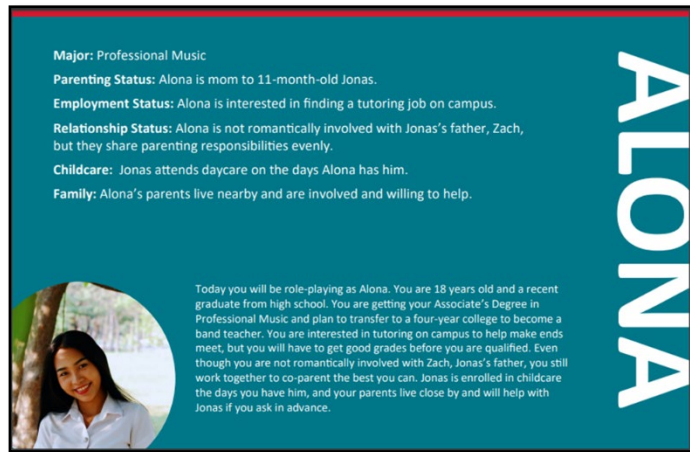


Figure 2. Life Card Character Story

including basic information regarding parenting, relationship, family help, etc. (Figure 2). In addition, there is a short biography going into further detail.

On the opposite side is the schedule for each character (Figure 3). The schedule appears as a table made up of the four semesters (Fall Semester 1 [F1], Spring Semester 1 [S1], Fall Semester 2 [F2], and Spring Semester 2 [S2]) labeled as columns, followed by the four primary

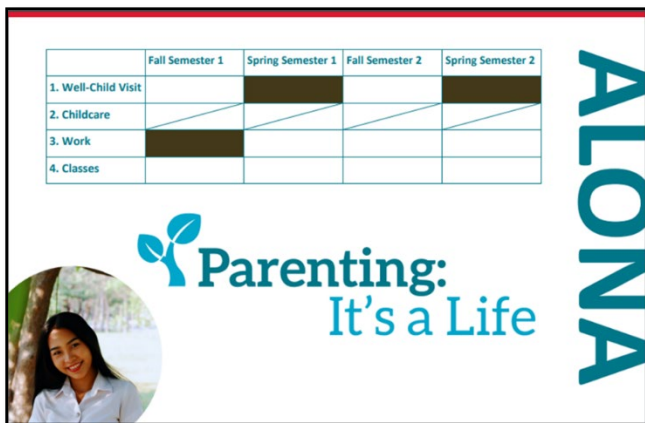


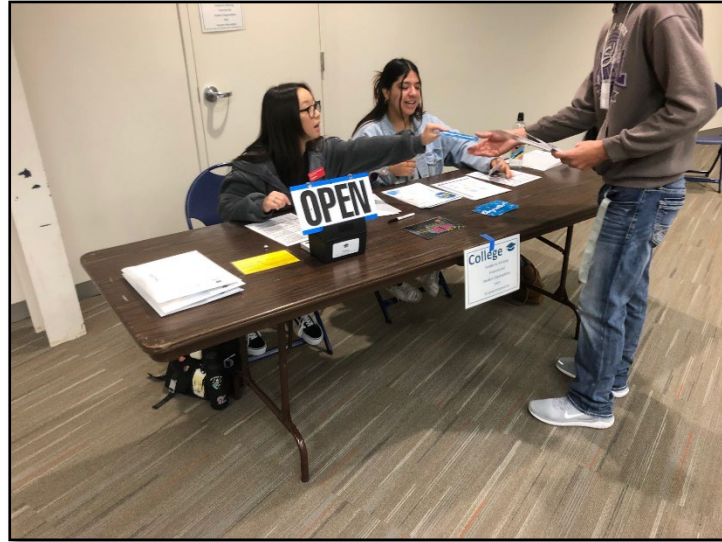
Figure 3. Life Card Character Schedule

table stops (Well-Child Visit, Childcare, Work, and Classes) labeled as rows. Each character has a unique schedule that aligns with their storyline. Some characters must go to every table each semester, and others do not. If a character need not stop at a

table, it is shown on the life card by a black box. More information regarding the Life Card can be found [here](#)⁶, in the Material Guide.

Tables

During the simulation, individuals will go around the room, stopping at different tables to complete a predetermined set of tasks present on the Chance Cards and Life Cards. Below are descriptions of the different tables and a general overview of each.



Each table will have one to two facilitators who interact with the students. The people working at the tables are called Table Monitors.

Each table has a unique table monitor guide for the table monitor. This guide has a general overview of the table, information regarding what character is visiting each semester, if they should have their child with them or not, and possible prompts/responses to say to the student. To help table monitors, videos were also created to summarize what to expect.

College Table. The college table is where individuals will go when they have a Chance Card that prompts them to gather information regarding financial aid, academic advising, student organizations, TRIO, and other college-related information. Depending on the class size, two individuals are recommended at the college table as it gets busy. If the College Sim is on a

⁶ <https://go.iastate.edu/Q5JNRS>

college campus, it is advised to have someone from the college help, especially someone who works in financial aid, as they can answer the questions more confidently and accurately. If you are an organization not affiliated with a college, you can contact local community colleges to see if they will help. Neither suggestion is required.

Health Table. The health table is where individuals will go when they have a Chance Card dealing with health/mental health concerns and for their well-child visit on their Life Card. The health table needs two individuals working as it is a hectic table providing many services. If available, it is suggested to invite someone who works with a community mental health organization to work this table. This way, there is someone knowledgeable regarding the mental health Chance Cards.

Human Services. The human services table is where individuals will go when they have a Chance Card relating to human service organizations. Multiple "agencies/programs" are represented at this table, including WIC, AEA, HHS, IWD, and Iowa Child Support. You should have information related to your county and or state. You can invite someone to be a table monitor from a social service agency in your area (someone from child support office or WIC).

Personal Table. Some Chance Cards require the individual to go to the personal table. Students will stop here to talk about stress and issues going on in their character's life. The discussion topics relate to something students and parents might experience or have to consider. Some conversation topics are:

- *How would having two children impact a parent's life?*
- *How do you establish boundaries at work when working with friends?*

- *Sometimes asking for help can be challenging. What can we do to feel more comfortable when we need to reach out for help?*
- *Do you think it is important to get along with your parents?*

Primary Table. Three tables are considered primary tables: child drop-off/pick-up, class, and work. Almost every character visits these tables every semester.

1) Child Drop-off/Pick-up. Individuals drop off their children at the beginning of each semester and must pick them up at the end of every semester. Individuals usually experience the frustration of long lines while dropping off and picking up their child from childcare. Only one person works at this table as it is designed to show the reality of delays associated with childcare.

2) Class. The class table is where individuals go to simulate being in class. It is suggested that the instructor of the actual course is the table monitor. To simulate being in class each semester, students will complete a worksheet. These worksheets are at an elementary level (dot-to-dot, maze, and word search). Each semester individuals will complete a new worksheet. For the final semester, individuals complete a matching activity where they match the resources they learned about during the simulation to the correct agency.

3) Work. Individuals must work on a puzzle for two minutes and is timed using a simple sand timer. One person monitors this table. The work table closes two minutes before the semester ends.

Set-up

The College Sim takes 30-45 minutes to set up, depending on location and if the facility is already prepared with the tables and chairs in the correct positions. At least 70 chairs and

seven tables are needed to facilitate the College Sim. The maximum number of participants in the College Sim should be 30, and each participant needs a chair. The rest of the chairs are for table monitors. Figure 4 shows the room set-up. This is a suggested placement of the tables and chairs.

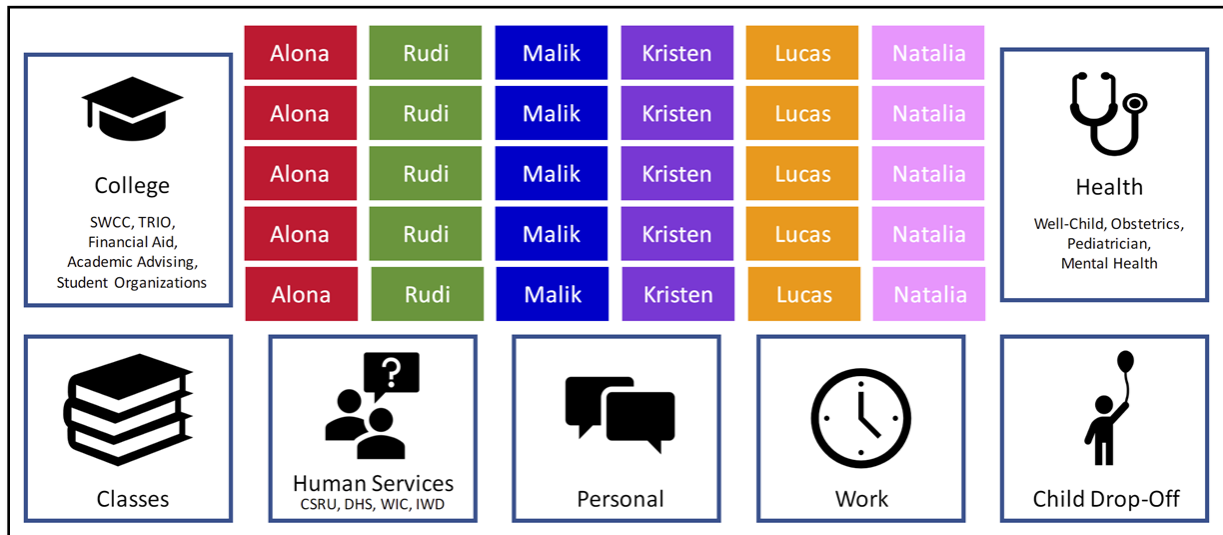


Figure 4. College Sim Room Set-Up

Timing

The College Simulation needs at least 60 minutes, but an ideal time is 90 minutes. In FY23, 60-minute simulations were piloted. This was because the length of the class period was changed. The 60-minute simulation shortens everything (semesters, turnaround time, and debriefing). Because of the shorter time, there is no formal in-person debriefing. An online debrief was created. During FY22, a one-minute break occurred between each semester; FY23 provided two minutes between each semester, adding time for a few debriefing comments and questions. Table 1 has guidelines for the length of each part of the College Sim.

Table 1. Timing

	90 Minute	60 Minute
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	College Simulation	College Simulation
Introduction	12 minutes	12 minutes
Semester (F1, S1, F2, S2)	10 minutes (40 total)	8 minutes (32 total)
Transition between semester	2 minutes (8 total)	2 minutes (8 total)
Debrief/Wrap-up	30 minutes	8 minutes (online debrief)

Each College Sim starts with a general introduction of PIAL facilitators and staff before receiving the instructions for participation in the College Sim. For a 90-minute College Sim (the ideal time), each semester will last around ten minutes. At about eight minutes, the facilitator should give an auditory and visual two-minute warning. This is done by playing a specific sound and loudly announcing two minutes are left in the semester. This offers individuals participating in the College Sim time to focus on their actions. There are two minutes between each semester so individuals can ask questions and regroup before the next semester begins. These times vary based on the class size and personal understanding of the College Sim.

Materials

A variety of materials is required to accurately and effectively facilitate the College Sim. The materials consist of some the PIAL team created and some that were purchased. Table 2 identifies which materials PIAL staff created, and Table 3 includes a list of material that PIAL retrieved from other sources (government resources) and adapted items PIAL bought for the College Sim.

Some materials made by PIAL staff were printed on cardstock and laminated by the printing services center on campus so they could be used for multiple years. Having an extra set of chance cards stored in the facilitator tote is always suggested.

Spanish. We created one set of Spanish characters which are set-up the same way as the other characters, but their life and chance cards are in Spanish. There is one set for each

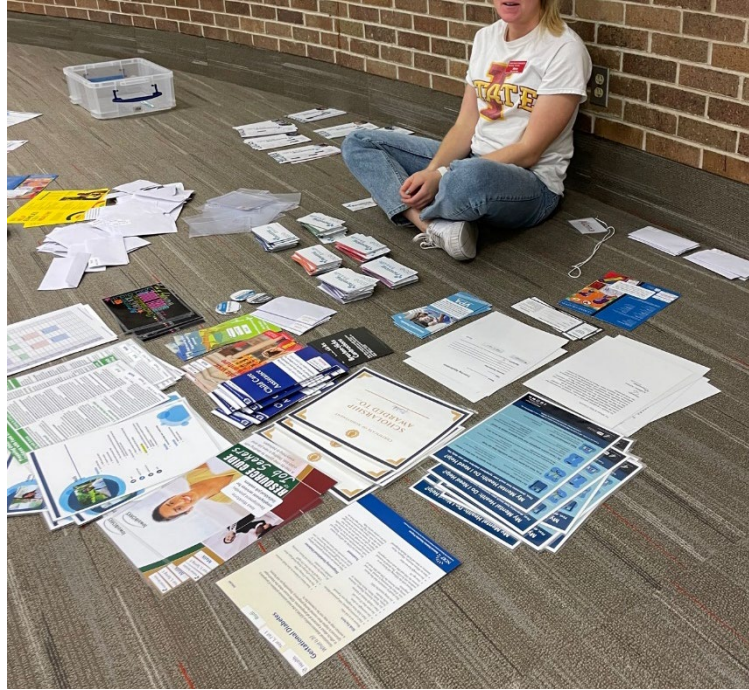
character. These specific diaper bags are labeled “Spanish.” There is also an additional baby for each translated character.

Organization of Materials

While the organizational methods described above work for us, we understand it might not work for everyone. Please manage the materials in a way that makes sense to your organization or team while maintaining the materials needed to complete the College Sim.

The most significant part of organizing the materials is labeling. If an item was not designed with a label, it was manually added. Name labels were printed on varying sizes of label sheets in the correct color corresponding to the rest of the materials, along with labels for semesters (Y1F1=Year 1, Fall Semester, Y2S2=Year 2, Spring Semester). Each handout a character receives from a table is labeled with the character who gets the handout, the semester it is given to that character, and the year it is given. A few handouts might have multiple names affixed since multiple characters receive the same handout. The labels were applied by hand. While this is a tedious process, we have found it helps participants know when to use what chance cards. It also helps the table monitors know they are handing out the right material and helps with resetting the College Sim.

Quick Reset and Multiple Simulations. Some days you might have to do what we call a *Quick Reset*. This is when you have under 15 minutes between two college sim sessions. When a quick reset needs to happen, there must be a complete additional set of all materials. While the facilitator is debriefing with the participants, more staff will take the diaper bags and empty the contents into a determined box or tote. Another person will ensure each diaper bag has a new set of chance cards, a life card, and a baby. If a third simulation is happening, then during the



second simulation, one individual will need to go through and sort out all the handouts from the tables along with the chance cards to ensure everything is ready for the next simulation. You may create a third set of materials to eliminate this step.

PIAL reuses one set of dolls and one set of diaper bags, even if there are multiple simulations in one day.

Table 2. PIAL Creations

Name	Category	FY Used
Tips for mentoring	College Table	FY23
Malik Resume	College Table	Both
Alona Resume	College Table	Both
ISU/Ames resource matching	Class Table	Both
Childcare sign-in sheet	Child Care Table	Both
College Sim congrats	College Table	Both
Natalia Letter of Rec	College Table	Both
Tutoring app	College Table	Both
Generic class schedule	College Table	Both
Alona letter of rec	College Table	Both
College sim major change form	College Table	Both
Scholarship certificate	College Table	Both
Name list, jazz	College Table	Both
Braxton hicks definition	Health Table	Both
Misc. Videos....	General	Both*
Script	Facilitator	Both*
Packing list	Facilitation	Both*
Quick reset instructions	Facilitation	Both
Clean up instructions	Facilitation	Both
Table signs	General	Both
Name card signs for chairs	General	Both
Name tags	Characters	FY23
LABELS	General	Both
Big envelope for human services	Human Services	Both
Little envelope for human services	Human Services	FY23
PowerPoint	Facilitation	Both*
Debrief script	Facilitation	Both*
Online debrief	Facilitation	FY23
surveys	Facilitation	Both*
Names for baby iron on	Character	FY23
Chance Cards	Character	Both*
Life Card	Character	Both*

Note. * indicates changes from FY22 to FY23.

Table 3. Purchased/Other Resources

Name	Category	Why	FY Used
Box for chance card	All tables	Organize materials	Both
Thin Dry erase markers	All tables	2-4 for each table, primary tables mark off life card	Both
Open/closed signs	All tables	Realism	FY23
Diaper bag (stadium bags)	Character	Hold materials	Both
Baby dolls	Character	Realism	Both
Name tag holders	Character	Allows for volunteers to know what character they are interacting with	FY23
Plastic envelope for chance cards	Character	Organization	Both
College study tips	College Table	College Table information	Both
Timer for Facilitator	General	Used to know how much time is left and give warning	Both
Folders debrief	General	Handed out resources and survey after sim	FY22
Sticky Notes	General	Have at each table for table guide to record any notes	Both
Pens	General	Have at each table for table guide to record any notes. Additional pens at the class table.	Both
Painters Tape	General	Used to tape up signs around the room.	Both
Large Plastic Storage Tote	General	Organization	Both
2 smaller plastic storage totes	General	Organization	Both
Clipboard	General	Organization	Both
Rubber bands	General	Chance cards/organization	Both
Clear plastic Folder to hold material at each table	General	Additional sets of materials will require more folders.	Both
Gestational Diabetes	Health Table	Health Table Information	Both
Measuring tape	Health Table	Health table task	Both
Band-Aids	Health Table	Health table task	FY22
Smiley face stickers	Health Table	Health table task	FY23
Child custody (edited)	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both

Iowa workforce (edited)	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both
Child custody Iowa judicial branch	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both
Women Infant and Children (WIC)	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both
Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) Brochure	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both
Child Care Assistance (CCA)	Human Services Table	Human Services information	Both
Two-minute sand timer	Work Table	Used at Work Table	Both
Puzzle	Work Table	Minimum of 50 pieces max of 200	Both

Introduction of College Sim

Before the College Sim begins, the facilitator explains the College Sim to all table monitors; this is also when any clarification questions can be asked before the students come in for the College Sim. This needs to occur 15 minutes before students are expected to arrive.

As students arrive, they are handed a diaper bag at the door and instructed to sit in a chair with the same name as the character on the diaper bag. As students come in and are seated, they are instructed to begin the pre-survey. In FY22, the pre-survey was completed on paper. In FY23, the pre-survey was completed online via a QR code, and paper surveys were also available (including surveys in Spanish).

The introduction has changed several times since the first College Sim in fall 2021. The goal was to have video instructions for FY23; unfortunately, there were continued technical difficulties. This needs to be addressed moving forward. Table 4 lists changes that specifically relate to the introduction part of the College Sim. A full list of all changes can be found in the Implementation and Process Study descriptions, found [here](#)⁷ for FY22 and [here](#)⁸ for FY23.

⁷ <https://go.iastate.edu/32FPHY>

⁸ <https://go.iastate.edu/2TVNQF>

Table 4. Introduction Changes

FY	Current Practice	Summary of Change	Explanation of Change
22	Verbal directions for students along with short PowerPoint.	Created a video with audio and visual directions for student participants.	The video was implemented one time, allowing for directions to be kept consistent. Would like to create a dynamic video for student directions in FY23.
22	Limited slides in PowerPoint directions.	More slides added to PowerPoint	It allows for students to maintain better attention and a visual information component.
22	Single Facilitator went through directions.	An additional Facilitator was used for initial instructions. This Facilitator showed what a character would do during the simulation.	Greater understanding for participants.
23	No specific instructions for reading chance cards.	Give specific instructions to read the newly shortened chance card.	Participants can engage better with table monitors, allowing for better conversation.
23	Instructional Video	At the simulation locations, the video's audio or visual was not working. The Facilitator gave each group verbal instructions	Given there were time crunches and audio issues when the videos would not work, we did not have the time to troubleshoot. Verbal directions were the most realistic option.

Debrief

In FY22, the College Sim had an in-person debrief involving all the students right after the end of the fourth semester. For this debrief, individuals first broke into groups around the room according to the character they played and discussed their experiences during the simulation. Next, the facilitator summarized each character's storyline. For the last activity of the debrief, the facilitator discussed the limitations of the simulation by asking real-world questions such as, "Do you think you would need a car in real life to be successful in this simulation?" After the debrief, individuals were instructed to complete the post-survey before leaving. They were also given a handout with a list of resources in the simulation.

Going into the College Sim in FY23, PIAL staff was made aware that class times would be shortened at both community colleges (excluding the one longer session we attended at ICCC) due to the removal of COVID guidelines. Because of this, a significant pivot occurred, and the PIAL team created an online debrief. A short in-person debrief occurred right after the simulated fourth semester, and the in-depth debrief was administered online. More information on the online debrief can be found later in the report.

Assessment

To observe knowledge gain, individuals were asked to complete a pre-survey before starting the College Sim and then to complete a post-survey after. During FY22, all the surveys were completed on paper and entered into Qualtrics by the PIAL team. In FY23, surveys went online. If a student could not complete the survey online, paper copies were available.

Several changes were made between the FY22 and FY23 surveys. These changes concerned wording and further clarification of several questions. Originally, for FY22, we asked

individuals to identify what would cause them to withdraw from class or college (problems with work, caring for dependents, childcare problems, having a child or children). For FY23, we specifically asked individuals what would cause them to skip class (problems with work, caring for dependents, childcare problems, having a child or children), and another question specifically asked what situations would cause them to withdraw from college (problems with work, caring for dependents, childcare problems, having a child or children). If an individual said they would withdraw from college, they were prompted with an additional open-ended question, thus giving individuals an option to explain why they would withdraw.

FY22 Report

During the academic year 21-22, 290 ($n = 290$) students took the pre-survey, and 297 ($n = 297$) students took the post-survey during the initial pilot year of the College Sim. A total of 248 respondents took both pre-and post-surveys. The surveys were completed on paper and entered into Qualtrics by a graduate assistant. Table 5 lists the different analyses. A graduate assistant wrote the [long](#)⁹ and [brief](#)¹⁰ reports for these data. A poster titled “*Evaluation of the ‘Parenting: It’s a Life’ College Simulation Pilot*” was presented at the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) conference in fall 2022. A copy of the presented poster can be found at <https://go.iastate.edu/5J6F83>.

Table 2. FY22 Analysis

Type of Analysis	How Used
Frequency and Descriptive Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand self-reported demographic information of program participants
Chi-Square Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify knowledge gain from before to after participating in the College Sim

⁹ <https://go.iastate.edu/ULKTTT>

¹⁰ <https://go.iastate.edu/4ZISES>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand participant attitude or behaviors before and after participating in the College Sim
Thematic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify trends in participant responses to open-ended questions

FY23 Report. During the academic year 2022-23, 239 participants submitted a pre-program survey, and 183 participants completed a post-program survey. In total, 159 participants responded to both the pre-program and post-program surveys. Surveys were completed using Qualtrics.

Five types of analyses were conducted using the data collected. Table 6 lists the analyses and how they were used in FY23. A graduate assistant wrote the [long](#)¹¹ and [brief](#)¹² reports for these data.

¹¹ <https://go.iastate.edu/LESTMN>

¹² <https://go.iastate.edu/BOFB61>

Table 3. FY23 Analysis

Type of Analysis	How Used
Frequency Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the self-reported demographic information of program participants • Identify participants' base knowledge of the topics being discussed during the College Sim
Chi-Square Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify knowledge gain from before and after participating in the College Sim • Understand participant attitude or behavior changes before and after participating in the College Sim
Correlation Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if age or year in college were related to, or associated with, any item responses
Independent sample t-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if race or ethnicity or gender was associated with any item responses before and after the College Sim • Understand how the debrief facilitation style (in-person vs online) was associated with participant responses
Thematic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify trends in participant responses to open-ended questions

College Simulation Process Study

Because the PIAL College Simulation is new, PIAL staff kept a detailed record of all changes made during implementing the College Sim. The changes were broken into these categories:

- Changes made during the simulation
- Proposed changes for next fiscal year
- Implemented proposed changes

Each category was broken down further:

- Description of the current or implemented practice
- Category of change (materials, student experience
- Facilitator or volunteer experience, set-up, and other)
- Summary of the change (what is specifically being changed)
- Explanation of the change (why the change is occurring).

Overview of Changes

With the pilot of any program, changes will likely be made. Some changes were made during the initial College Sim in FY22, while others were made before the College Sim was offered in FY23. During these first years of the College Sim, all changes will be documented. PIAL is keeping the living document private due to continuous edits. A copy of these changes are in the Public Access folder for FY22 ([here](#))¹³ and FY23 ([here](#))¹⁴. The Process Study (preceding two links) are divided into sheets based on fiscal year, and each sheet is divided into these categories:

- Implementation
- Current Practice FY22
- Category of Change
- Summary of Change
- Explanation of Change

These are further broken down into color-coded categories:

- Changes made during simulation (things happening on the fly that were implemented)
- Proposed changes for the next FY
- Proposed changes from the previous FY that were implemented in the current FY
- List of things to buy or replace

This is a living document and will be updated as needed. This precise documentation allows a transparent view into program creation and initial implementation. This is especially helpful for anyone wanting to do the College Sim as it helps them understand the “why” behind the program.

Community Participants. A major component added during FY23 was having individuals from the community come to the College Sim. This included inviting people from the local child

¹³ <https://go.iastate.edu/32FPHY>

¹⁴ <https://go.iastate.edu/2TVNQF>

support office to serve as table monitors; that way, someone knowledgeable was available to answer students' questions had. Additionally, a community mental health professional was present at a majority of the College Sims. This lets students discuss mental health with a professional and connect to resources. One mental health provider suggested changes to the content regarding mental health. This suggestion is being reviewed to see if anything will change in FY24.

Life and Chance Cards. Another significant change made from FY22 to FY23 was condensing the wording on the Chance Cards and Life Cards. This was done based on individual feedback on their College Sim post-survey. Individuals reported that instructions were not clear and there was confusion. Individuals spent more time than expected reading their Chance Cards. Edits to the Chance Cards included shortening of text, larger print, bolded words, and direct instructions on what to do. A new symbol was also added to indicate if a child should be brought to the table.

Figure 5 has two parts. The top (“FY22”) shows the original design of the Chance Card and the bottom (“FY23”) shows the updated version used in FY23. The text was drastically

shortened, and key details and important items were bolded.

Bolded words gave participants

a general understanding of

what the chance card referred

to at a quick glance. Individuals

were expected to visit the

tables with knowledge of why

they were there. With the

newly-designed cards,

individuals could quickly reference the "why" behind the action with the bolded words.

In addition to changing the text format, an additional icon was added to indicate if the

action on the card requires the

character to have their child or

baby with them. Figure 6

shows an example. The top

(“FY22”), includes only an icon

of a stethoscope, compared to

the bottom (“FY23”) that

includes an icon of a baby.

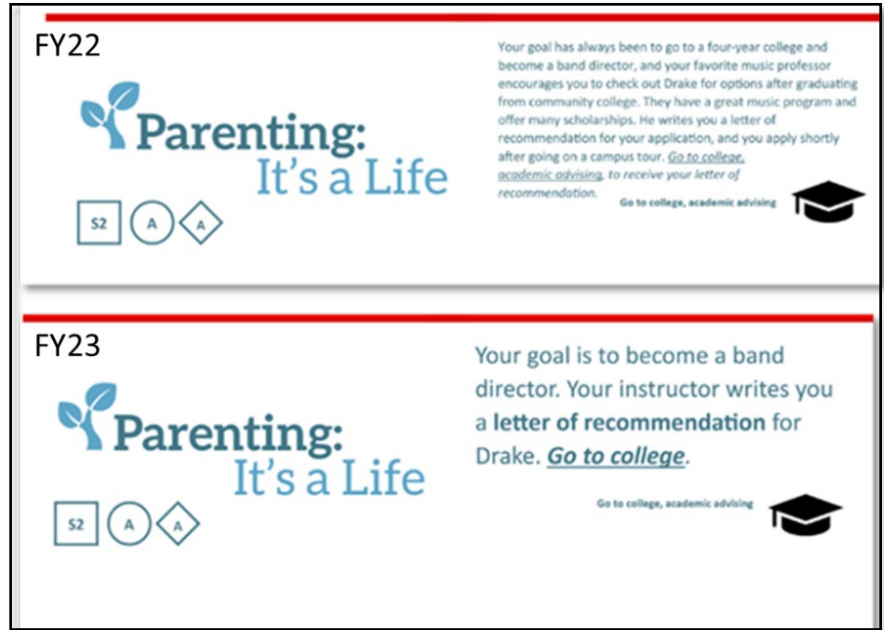


Figure 5. Updated Chance Card



Figure 6. Additional Changes to Chance Card

Challenges

Several challenges with the College Sim were successfully addressed since the pilot began in fall 2021. Some of these challenges were immediately dealt with as they happened, as indicated in the process study document. Many of these challenges were expected as part of rolling out a program for the first time (timing, usage of space, and clarification of instructions). More considerable challenges included larger class sizes than expected, multiple simulations in a short time frame, and the creation of an online debrief.

An Abundance of Participants. In the fall of 2021 while PIAL was piloting the simulation with Iowa Central Community College, several classes had over 30 students, which caused a shortage of simulation supplies. This problem was dealt with in real-time by letting students pair up and complete the simulation together. Due to the higher number of students, facilitators could not monitor each participant completing the simulation. As the simulation continued, PIAL personnel noticed those who were partnered began to share duties, multi-task, or one person would check out altogether.

The larger-than-expected class size issue prompted more communication with the college class instructors to determine the exact number of students and explain that we only have supplies for 30 students. There were still classes with up to 40 students, but the project coordinator worked with the instructor to see if there were any other options to make the class size closer to 30. If not, a new pairing system came into play where our staff paired the participants and gave direct and clear instructions about how they needed to work together and stay together. This proved to be successful in FY23.

Online Debrief. A specific challenge going into fall 2022 included having a shorter length of time for the College Sim to be presented at Southwest Community College (SWCC). The class period was decreased from 90 minutes to 55 minutes. The time change reflected a return to pre-COVID pandemic class schedules and it was clear we needed to pivot. After meeting with SWCC representatives to discuss the options, we decided students would experience the college simulation in their 55-minute class and complete an online debrief as part of their next class period.

The design goal of the online debrief was to be short, jog participants' memory of their experience with the simulation, and make sure they were aware of the resources available to them as students and young parents. PIAL staff worked with Iowa State University's Child Support team's instructional designers to create this training. The online debrief was designed to have seven short videos, one for each table the characters visited in the simulation. To begin the debrief, participants clicked on the character they role-played and entered one word to describe their experience with the simulation. From there each student watched the video for each table. A short closing video thanked them for their participation, and they finished by taking the post-survey.

This online debrief took about 15 minutes to complete. Issues arose when the online debrief was implemented by the class instructor without the help of PIAL staff. It became difficult for the instructors to ensure students were completing the debrief since it was not part of their grade. PIAL suggested instructors give students points for completing the debrief, but that was not possible for everyone. Analysis of the online debrief results are still being

conducted. Depending on the results, the PIAL team will determine the usefulness of the online debrief in future College Sim offerings or if alternative solutions need to be created.

Quick Reset. Another main challenge was having a short turnaround between class periods at SWCC. The times between the classes varied from 15 minutes to one minute. Due to this, a *Quick Reset Guide* was created. More information regarding the *Quick Reset Guide* can be found [here](#)¹⁵. The guide explains what to do if there are two or more simulations scheduled back-to-back. If two College Sims were planned with a short turnaround time, a full second set of materials was used. If three College Sims were planned, during the second simulation, a PIAL staff member would sort the cards and materials. The quick reset instructions included where to find the second set of materials, what to do with the first set of materials, and a few miscellaneous preparation tools. These instructions can be found on small, laminated sheets within the table monitor supplies. This design worked successfully for both the 2021 and 2022 school year.

Summary: College Simulation

The College Sim has many moving parts that need to be coordinated and accounted for, including volunteers and materials. This is not unique to the College Sim, many programs require materials, time, and effort. What is unique about the College Sim is that it gives emerging adults real-life experience and connects them with resources that will apply to them now, even if they are not currently parenting.

After completing the College Sim, the goal is for participants to believe it is possible to be a student and parent at the same time if the situation occurred, along with having a greater

¹⁵ <https://go.iastate.edu/EBN33R>

understanding of resources in their community. While the College Sim is designed for individuals to learn, it is done in an interactive and engaging format that leaves young people with an overall positive experience.

Emerging Adult Curriculum (EAC)

Background

The module topics of the PIAL Emerging Adult curriculum come from the language of the grant and the continued relationship with Iowa Child Support. The modules were designed to reach the 18-25 age range, allowing participants to think more critically about these topics. Each module consists of an introduction that gives a base level of knowledge and later activities that engage students with the topic at an age-appropriate level. The modules help those who are parenting or plan to parent. The five modules include:

- Healthy Relationships
- Economic Mobility and Stability
- Co-Parenting
- Establishing Paternity
- Child Support

Modules were based on topics covered in the original PIAL curriculum written for a 7-12 grade audience and adapted to engage with emerging adults in the 18-25 age range.

Curriculum Creation

Creating the content of these modules was a group effort led by the former Project Coordinator for the Emerging Adult initiative. This lead staff member held meetings with graduate students, undergrad students, and other PIAL leadership to brainstorm what should be included in the modules and how to make them informative and interactive. Weekly meetings occurred for several months while the curriculum was in the initial development phase.

A living document was created, allowing lead staff and team members to add ideas to the facilitator guide. By using a living document, staff could work on the document at the same time and track changes. Meanwhile, as the facilitator guides were developed, the lead staff member and others worked on PowerPoints that matched the content developed in the guide. This was an ongoing process until the modules were ready for the initial pilot evaluation.

Module Descriptions

Each module covers a relevant topic containing critical information for emerging adults. Modules include a variety of interactive activities, and participant contribution is highly encouraged. The following module descriptions are divided into different sections or activities. These modules are designed to be stand-alone but also can be completed as a set. All module information and materials can be found in the public CyBox folder [here](#)¹⁶. Each module is listed on its own page.

Healthy Relationships

The Healthy Relationship module focuses on different types of unhealthy relationships relevant for emerging adults and shows how these relationships might be portrayed in the media. When this module was created, PIAL staff wanted to include different relationships that individuals might have experienced but might not have known were unhealthy. For participants to feel comfortable sharing potentially sensitive information, all responses in this module are set-up to be delivered anonymously through polling software.

Opener. Participants start the module by answering questions about where they see unhealthy relationships in the media and their own lives. The facilitator then gives

¹⁶ <https://go.iastate.edu/GW8XFV>

examples of unhealthy relationships in the media, such as Megan Fox and Machine Gun Kelly.

Activity 1: *Wheels*. During this part of the module, participants are shown two videos: one that shows an unhealthy romantic relationship and one example of an unhealthy relationship with peers, highlighting that not all relationship abuse happens in romantic or sexual relationships. Participants are also introduced to the *Power and Control Wheel* and the *Respect Wheel*.

Activity 2: *Unhealthy Relationship Dynamics*. This section explicitly covers different types of unhealthy relationships that people might have seen in the media or experienced themselves. The different types include *financial abuse*, *academic abuse*, *harassment and stalking*, and *technology*. These different types of unhealthy characteristics are discussed, and individuals can anonymously respond to questions asked.

Ending Remarks: The module ends with a discussion about helpful resources to leave participants with tools and knowledge to ensure they strive for healthy relationships.

Economic Mobility and Stability

This module takes participants along a path of deciding what is important to them in a career and learning what is essential for employers in the hiring process. This module aims to have participants draw from their previous and current experiences and discover how that relates to their careers.

Activity 2: Current and Future Skills. The last activity focuses on skills.

Facilitators go through eight skills valued by employers and note which skills they have and which ones they need to strengthen.

Co-Parenting

Co-parenting can be difficult to discuss since some people have a personal connection to a co-parenting situation. This module informs participants of best practices for co-parenting but also emphasizes each co-parenting situation is different, and ultimately the child's parents know what is best for them and their family. Due to this topic's sensitive nature, a self-care warning is mentioned first in this module.

Opener: During this opening activity, facilitators discuss co-parenting scenarios from two popular television shows (*Grey's Anatomy* and *Gilmore Girls*). Participants watch a clip from both shows and assess the co-parenting dynamics. After watching the clips, the facilitator uses prompts and questions to gather the participant's thoughts.

Activity 1: Co-Parenting Relationships. Participants are placed into groups, and each group receives a different co-parenting scenario card. Before the scenarios are discussed, the facilitator mentions different strategies to remember while co-parenting. Next, participants think of a positive co-parenting strategy within their groups and share it with everyone. Finally, participants read the scenarios in their groups. Groups rate the relationship in the scenario from one to five and discuss what can improve the relationship. The module ends with an emphasis on the importance of co-parenting and how multiple caring adults in a child's life increases their chances for positive outcomes.

Establishing Paternity

Establishing paternity is beneficial for everyone involved in the child's life. The activities in this module discuss the importance of establishing paternity and how paternity can be established in Iowa. This module shows the benefits of establishing paternity and provides information for parents to begin the process if they have not already. Some benefits mentioned are access to both parents' insurance, military benefits, and social security.

Opener: Two Paths. In this first activity, participants listen to two similar scenarios. Individuals then are encouraged to share the main difference between the two stories. In one story, paternity is established, and in the other one, paternity is not established.

Activity 1: Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Completion. Individuals complete the voluntary paternity affidavit sample for one couple in the previous scenario.

Activity 2: What Happened Next. This final activity discusses the importance of establishing paternity from social, emotional, and legal perspectives.

Child Support

The Child Support module informs young parents of child support's purpose and debunks many myths and stereotypes about child support.

Opener: Child Support Pays For... The facilitator splits participants into groups and gives each group a stack of cards, each with the name of a different item. Each groups' cards are unique. These items include objects, services, and interests that relate to family life. The cards include diapers, hair care, manicure, toys, markers, band fees, summer camp, streaming services, utilities, etc. In their groups, the participants then decide if the item or topic *can* be bought with a child support payment or if it *cannot* be

bought with a child support payment. Once each group has theirs sorted, the whole class discusses whether the item cards are placed in the correct category. Participants might want to move things from one side to another. Eventually, they learn everything that is listed *can* be bought using child support payments. We reinforce that child support payments go into the overall pool of income the custodial parent receives.

Activity 1: Debunking Myths. To prompt discussion of stereotypes about child support, individuals are told to search for a *child support mom meme* or *child support dad meme* online in their groups. The groups share the images and memes they find with the rest of the group. Common stereotypes are "*father who never pays*" and "*mother who spends child support on herself.*" The facilitator then provides information to debunk those stereotypes.

Activity 2: Child Support Benefits. The facilitator discusses the benefits of child support for the payee, payor, and the child.

Activity 3: Quadrants on Willingness and Ability. This module ends with the facilitator, discussing some inhibitors for those not paying child support and whether they are due to ability or willingness. The overall message is that child support helps both parents and the child, but it can often be complex. Participants receive information about how to contact a representative from the child support offices in Iowa, where they can ask questions the facilitator could not answer.

Pilot Evaluation

The pilot evaluation of the newly designed Emerging Adult curriculum began with a presentation to select Iowa State University staff and external subject matter experts. The pilot

round aimed to allow participants to observe the modules' content, engagement, timing, and flow. Afterward, participants received a short feedback survey to document their comments related to the module.

The pilot team assessed the feedback and planned to make changes. Those assigned to review the project began to incorporate content-related input related to the modules' objectives. Subject matter experts gave feedback for several modules. Representatives from Iowa WORKS provided verbal feedback and resources for the Economic Mobility and Stability Module. During the pilot for the Co-Parenting Module, many participants were co-parents themselves with personal experiences to contribute.

PIAL leadership and supervisors made a timeline decision to continue piloting these modules with other groups before the edits were finalized.

Assessment. Each module has a corresponding pre- and post-survey that has knowledge, attitude, and behavior questions. The information from these surveys will be used for the overall pilot evaluation.

Pilot Program Sites

The emerging adult curriculum modules were piloted with two community-based programs that provide resources for pregnant and parenting youth.

Young Parents Together (YPT)

Young Parents Together (YPT) is a parenting program for expectant and parenting teens and provides education and resources. YPT was chosen to participate in the pilot program because of previous successful interactions with the PIAL program. The first module presented to YPT was the Healthy Relationships module, in the fall of 2022. When the facilitators arrived

in Waterloo, they realized there would be children in the room during the presentation. They quickly pivoted after considering the mature content. No videos were shown, and noise and distractions from the children often stifled discussions. Noting the difficulty of presenting engaging content in this space, PIAL facilitators asked program personnel if childcare would be an option during future presentations. However, since the next presentation was the following week, there was not enough time to implement a childcare station.

The next week's presentation was the Economic Mobility and Stability module. Although this module's content is not mature or potentially triggering, there were still many children in the room while the PIAL facilitators presented. Even with another facilitator to help with noise control and distractions, it was still challenging to have meaningful conversations. Despite this, many participants had great insight and were excited to continue to find their career path.

After this presentation, PIAL staff and YPT personnel decided it would be best to pause the rest of the modules until they could put childcare in place. In the coming months, YPT worked tirelessly to make this a possibility for them. A few months later, we returned to Waterloo to present the Co-Parenting module to only the young parents and their support people. The responses were much better with childcare in place. We had honest conversations with young parents and discussed the importance of co-parenting. The subsequent presentations generated the same feedback where participants asked great questions, applied the situations to their lives, and expressed gratitude for the information. PIAL is working with the group to decide when or if the first two presentations should be presented again with the new childcare practice in place.

The Nest Program (YSS)

YSS of Ames provides a wealth of services and resources for those needing help, primarily serving youth and young adults. PIAL has worked with YSS in various capacities over the years and built working relationships with many of their staff. This created an opportunity to ask personnel if they had any groups who would benefit from the emerging adult curriculum. YSS staff connected PIAL with the coordinator of their Nest programs. These programs are for young parents and families to listen to guest speakers, discuss various topics, and receive resources such as food and clothing for their children. PIAL met with the Nest coordinator to discuss if the curriculum would be a good fit, and they decided it would be. Two programs occur every other week—one in Ames and one in Boone, IA.

The earliest availability for the program to be offered was in March 2023. PIAL accepted. The plan was for PIAL to present the Healthy Relationships module to both groups in back-to-back weeks. As the first week approached, the program coordinator informed us that the presentation needed to be held virtually due to unforeseen circumstances. On the day of the presentation, several difficulties arose, such as the inability to answer the anonymous questions if the participants joined the call on their phones and little willingness to share or participate. This learning experience helped us understand this module may need to be revised for virtual presentations and, for now, is better suited for in-person facilitation only.

The next week's presentation was delivered in person. This presentation was given to a group of just two people—a young couple expecting a baby. These participants were excellent and attentive, but the facilitators realized it was a sensitive topic to present to a couple. There was potentially some pressure to answer the questions with "I don't know" or "I am not sure."

The two gave great feedback, and they especially enjoyed applying information about unhealthy characteristics to situations outside of romantic relationships. PIAL may want to create a protocol for presenting to one couple at a time. The ongoing relationship between the Nest program and PIAL is hopeful as they wait for their funding for the 2024 fiscal year.

Peer to Peer Digital Campaign

The final initiative for Objective 2 of the grant was to begin a Peer-to-Peer Digital Campaign highlighting young parents. The idea was to amplify the voices of young parents on social media to encourage others, share resources, and tell their individual stories about parenting tips, nutrition, and support systems.

In the beginning phases of this project in the fall of 2021, the most popular app used by emerging adults was TikTok. As a source of popular trends and opportunities to share tips and tricks, PIAL leadership decided this app would be the main platform for the campaign's content. The project coordinator recruited one of PIAL's undergraduate workers to begin researching popular trends and the team scheduled two focus groups for young parents to provide input on what content they want to see. The “big picture” ideas captured during the focus groups were that young parents wanted to see relatable, realistic, and encouraging content.

Parent Ambassadors

Now that PIAL had a media outlet and some content areas to highlight, it was time to find young parents to create this content to begin the campaign. PIAL hired one of the young parents who had gone to the focus group to be the first ambassador. The young parent was excited to share their story but experienced logistical struggles since they weren't in the same place as the PIAL team. As an employee of PIAL, the parent ambassador had issues with

paperwork and other processes involved with university HR. After experiencing these issues, PIAL staff pivoted away from hiring parent ambassadors through the university and began to explore other ways to compensate young parents for participating in the campaign.

Cash for Content

By brainstorming other ways to encourage young parents to participate, the peer-to-peer team considered recruiting young parents to create content independently in exchange for gift cards. The idea was that young parents could meet with PIAL representatives via Zoom to discuss the campaign and content creation guidelines. They could then make up to ten short TikToks in exchange for gift cards totaling up to \$100. The social media specialist made a flyer¹⁸ to circulate across campus, local resource centers, and other locations in the Ames area.

As a couple of weeks passed, no young parents contacted PIAL to participate. PIAL continued to run into conflicts reaching the desired outcome. With no young parents reaching out with interest, PIAL turned to personal connections. The social media team met with two young parents known by PIAL members who agreed to participate. PIAL provided examples of the videos they could make along with various topics to cover and especially what topics to stay away from (i.e., reproductive rights, contraception). Both parents were confident and willing to create their own TikTok videos.

Platform Pivot

As the peer-to-peer team came closer to having content to post, a significant development occurred. In December 2022, Iowa's governor issued a directive to ban access to TikTok on State of Iowa devices. Due to receiving funding from Iowa Child Support, a state of

¹⁸ <https://go.iastate.edu/K4N1S5>

Iowa government agency, the PIAL team pivoted from using TikTok. Fortunately, the short snippet video format is available on other social media platforms. The team moved forward, planning to post these videos on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram and monitor which platforms provided the best traction.

Interviews

With the pivot from TikTok solidified, PIAL hoped to receive content for the other platforms quickly. The social media team continued to contact the young parents who were interested in making content, but those parents had trouble conceptualizing our vision for the campaign. PIAL brainstormed other ideas to obtain content and landed on young parent interviews. In this setup, PIAL created a set of questions to prompt interviewees to talk about the campaign's desired content areas. Those content areas included:

- Daily parenting life
- Developmental stages
- Parenting hacks or tips
- Nutrition
- Handling parenting stress

Interview Protocol

PIAL contacted the parents who originally signed up, asked our team for recommendations, and shared the opportunity with the YPT group in Waterloo, IA. The line of communication started via email, text, or phone, depending on the parent's preference. A basic email template was created and edited to fit the needs of each client. The incentive for the parent remained gift cards, but the amount was reduced to \$50 for one interview. We expressed those who interviewed could still make up to five more videos on their own to receive another \$50. No parents chose to complete more videos.

After the initial communication confirming the parents' interest in completing an interview, a plan for logistics started to be established. PIAL representatives worked with the parents to decide a time and location and answered miscellaneous questions. PIAL also shared the questions ahead of time and allowed each person the choice to not discuss specific questions or topic areas while affirming they would receive the gift card regardless. As communication improved between the PIAL team and parents, PIAL adjusted the email templates to include frequently asked questions about clothing and when they should receive the gift card. PIAL encouraged parents to dress comfortably and choose locations they agreed were suitable. PIAL expressed the ability to travel anywhere in Iowa if parents could not come to Ames or ISU campus.

When logistics were settled, the next step was for the parent to sign a consent form agreeing to let PIAL use the footage on social media and for other purposes PIAL considered necessary. The consent form allowed participants to optout at any point and described the incentive plan for the gift cards. If a parent was under 18, their parent or guardian had to sign the form. These forms could be completed electronically or on paper, depending on what worked best for the interviewee. The completed consent forms were stored electronically in PIAL's records. The other form participants had to fill out was a participant profile. These captured demographics such as race, current age, and the age they became a parent.

Questions

About 20 questions were created for parents. The questions focused on daily parenting life, parenting tips, nutrition, child development, and parenting stress. Each theme had three to four open-ended questions designed to allow the parent to expand on their thoughts. After

each set of questions during the interviews, the young parents were given a short break and encouraged and complimented. The interview typically lasted 60-90 minutes.

Completing Interviews

Young parents were recruited based on personal connections through the PIAL program and chosen based on who the PIAL staff felt would interview well. All interviews were recorded both with audio and visual. Interviews were conducted using two cameras for filming (allowing for multiple angles), staged background, and a lapel microphone to ensure sound quality. These recordings were all edited into short and long clips by the Social Media Specialist. Subtitles are included in these interviews to increase accessibility to the viewer. PIAL staff decided when the short and long videos needed to be posted and on what platform (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook). Based on these discussions, a calendar was created.

Video quality

After each interview, changes were adopted to the visual and audio equipment to improve the quality of the videos. The first interview with a young parent was done with the Social Media Specialist's personal camera, which was primarily for still photography, and back recordings were filmed on an iPhone. Later, better quality equipment was used, and instead of still microphones, lapel mics were attached to the interview subjects to capture their audio without outside interference. We also used Adobe Premiere's transcript and closed captioning abilities for accessibility in the final video.

Conclusion

Expanding PIAL to include emerging adults has allowed individuals throughout Iowa to learn about resources available to them if they become a parent while in college, along with

learning life skills through the Emerging Adult Curriculum (EAC). With the EAC, individuals learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships, establishing paternity, co-parenting, child support, and career readiness. The EAC curriculum has been piloted with different groups of emerging adults and young parents. This has allowed individuals to learn about topics that apply to them. The PIAL team will continue to evaluate these three initiatives (College Sim, EAC, Peer-to-Peer Digital Campaign) and determine what to continue offering, what to modify, and what to pause based on assessment feedback and resources.