



# Parenting in Prison Programme

Value for Outcomes Evaluation

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This is an INTERNAL evaluation report, intended for PSN and Social Services use, unless stated otherwise by Social Services Leadership Team.

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## Conflict of Interest Declaration

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# Glossary

<b>DoC</b>	Department of Corrections
<b>FWN</b>	Family Works Northern
<b>IPSP</b>	Individual Parenting Support Plan
<b>PiP</b>	Parenting in Prison
<b>PSN</b>	Presbyterian Support Northern
<b>SET</b>	Service Evaluation Team
<b>VfM</b>	Value for Money

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# Executive Summary

This report presents the evaluation findings of the *Parenting in Prison* (PiP) programme, delivered by Family Works Northern (FWN) in partnership with Ara Poutama Aotearoa, Department of Corrections (DoC). The evaluation aimed to assess how effectively the programme uses resources to support incarcerated parents, determine the extent to which it creates social value for parents, children, whānau and communities, and identify opportunities to enhance its design and delivery.

Effective parenting plays a vital role in shaping children's development, wellbeing, and long-term life outcomes. Evidence consistently shows that children raised by responsive, consistent, and supportive caregivers achieve better results across health, emotional, educational, and social domains. For incarcerated parents, prison can create a unique opportunity to participate in structured parenting programmes that may not otherwise be available, providing time and space to reflect on their parenting role and build new skills. At the same time, parenting from prison presents significant challenges, including emotional strain, disrupted family relationships, and limited or monitored contact with children. The Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme forms part of a wider suite of rehabilitation initiatives designed to support parenting identity, strengthen family bonds, and enable successful reintegration into society. Since its introduction in 2015, PiP has sought to equip incarcerated parents with practical strategies, parenting knowledge, and emotional support to help them maintain and rebuild family connections.

The evaluation utilised aspects of the Value for Money (VfM) evaluation approach to explore the value created by the PiP programme. The value proposition developed with key stakeholders sets out how the programme aimed to utilise resources to generate value. Embedded within this were several key criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and equity. To examine the value proposition, three key evaluation questions were established:

1. Determine how well resources are being used and whether this is justified by the value created through the PiP programme.
2. Explore the short-term and medium-term outcomes of clients, families and whānau participating in the PiP programme.
3. Assess programme processes to identify what works well and could be improved.

A series of structured rubrics were established that set-out the criteria and standards that guided the final evaluative judgments made from the data and evidence collected. The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with participants (n=13), surveys of FWN facilitators (n=10) and DoC staff (n=7), one programme observation, and a review of course materials and participant evaluation data.

## Summary of findings

### *How does the Parenting in Prison programme create value?*

The evaluation found that the Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme delivers value by transforming existing resources into meaningful outcomes for incarcerated parents, their children, whānau, and the wider community. PiP makes efficient use of existing infrastructure, partnerships, and skilled facilitators to provide targeted group-based support that is effective and relationally strong. Delivery is equitable and responsive, acknowledging the complex realities of parenting from prison and creating safe spaces for peer connection, shared

learning, and trust-building. The programme generates social value by restoring parenting identity, fostering family connections, and fostering hope - foundations for intergenerational wellbeing and successful reintegration.

*To what extent does the Parenting in Prison programme provide good value for the resources invested?*

The evaluation rated 28 indicators across the three levels of the value proposition<sup>1</sup>. Across the three levels of the value proposition, the overall spread shows most judgements fall in the Good–Excellent range, with a smaller cluster in Adequate, and only a couple with Insufficient Evidence. In total, there were seven Excellent ratings and nine Good ratings, reflecting consistent strengths in programme delivery, stakeholder support, and social value generation. A further five criteria were rated Adequate, with two judged as having Insufficient Evidence, and one criterion assessed as borderline Insufficient–Adequate. This distribution indicates that while PiP demonstrates clear value and effectiveness in key areas, some aspects require further evidence or improvement.

Efficient and equitable management of resources		
VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment <sup>2</sup>
<b>Funding and Accountability</b>	Regular monitoring and evaluation of programme performance	Adequate
	Delivery is well-resourced and meets intended outputs	Good
<b>Equitable and efficient service delivery</b>	Lived experience of parents valued and incorporated	Excellent
	Utilises existing infrastructure, partnerships and relationships to maximise resources	Good
	Participant engagement	Good
<b>Stakeholder support and programme alignment</b>	Key stakeholder groups support and advocate for the programme	Excellent
	Fits with broader justice, corrections and social service programme strategies, priorities and goals, ensuring cross sectoral alignment	Good
	Support/aligns with violence prevention action	Adequate

Programme delivery is equitable, relevant and efficient		
VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment
<b>Adaptable &amp; equitable programme delivery</b>	Tailoring delivery to parents' needs and goals	Good
	Evolving and improving service delivery to overcome barriers to parent engagement/participation	Insufficient – Adequate

<sup>1</sup> A full breakdown of the evaluative judgement and rationale behind these is provided in the findings chapter of this report.

	Safe and supportive space conducive for learning	Excellent
<b>Culturally Responsive approaches</b>	Culturally respectful programme	Excellent
	Valuing and inclusion of Te ao Māori, Tikanga Māori and Mātauranga Māori	Adequate
<b>Relevant and effective content</b>	Participants are satisfied with the programme	Excellent
	Participants feel empowered to make positive changes	Good
	Use of evidence-informed content that instils practical, effective parenting knowledge, skills and strategies	Good

Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities and society		
VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment
<b>Parents experience improved outcomes</b>	Participants develop better parenting knowledge and skills	Good
	Participants are more confident as parents, developing greater self-esteem	Excellent
	Parents experience strengthened whanaungatanga through more positive engagement, communication and connection with their children, family and whānau	Adequate
	Parents are motivated to participate in further learning	Good
<b>Support networks and Inclusion in the Community</b>	Participants build connections with other parents	Excellent
	Parents feel supported and develop awareness of accessible community parenting services	Adequate
<b>Children and families experience' improved outcomes</b>	Families' wellbeing is enhanced through improved communication, positive contact, and application of parenting knowledge and skills	Insufficient evidence
	Children experience greater stability, emotional security and positive role modelling, reducing their own risk of negative life outcomes	Insufficient evidence
<b>Effective use of resource for rehabilitation and reintegration</b>	Parents view programme as important to their rehabilitation and reintegration	Good
	Parents express confidence in future rehabilitation and reintegration	Adequate
<b>Contribution to long-term social outcomes</b>	Participants express commitment to staying connected to children/family and engaged with community support and networks	Excellent
	Parents recognise intergenerational impacts of incarceration on children/family	Excellent

*What improvements could be made to generate further value through the PiP programme?*

Overall, PiP is an effective and valued programme that delivers value for the resources invested by enhancing parenting capabilities, affirming parental identity, and contributing to rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes. To strengthen future impact and the value created, the evaluation recommends:

- (1) strengthening monitoring and feedback loops to support programme development;
- (2) deepening the cultural responsiveness of the programme, particularly stronger integration of Māori parenting; and
- (3) strengthening participant selection processes.

With these enhancements, the PiP programme is well-positioned to build on its strong foundations and further augment its impact for parents, children, and communities.

# 1.0 Introduction

This document details the findings of a Value for Money (VfM) evaluation of the Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme, operated by Family Works Northern in partnership with Ara Poutama Aotearoa, Department of Corrections (DoC). The PiP programme, initiated in 2015, forms part of a broader DoC offered suite of parenting interventions aimed at supporting incarcerated parents to maintain and enhance their relationships with their children, reducing recidivism, and promoting successful community reintegration.

Effective parenting lays the foundation for children's health, development, and lifelong wellbeing. However, not all parents have access to the knowledge, skills, or support needed to parent effectively - especially those facing social or economic disadvantage. Building core parenting skills such as emotional responsiveness, consistent boundaries, and positive communication is critical to promoting positive outcomes for children and strengthening families. One group of parents who often face heightened barriers to developing and practising these skills are those who are incarcerated.

Parenting from prison poses significant challenges for parents, including limited and controlled contact with children, emotional distress, and the disruption of family dynamics. These factors contribute to negative psychological impacts for parents and substantial emotional and developmental effects for their children. Effective interventions that enhance parenting capabilities and family relationships are essential to mitigating these harms.

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Determine how well resources are being used and whether this is justified by the value created through the PiP programme.
- Explore the short-term and medium-term outcomes of clients, families and whānau participating in the PiP programme.
- Assess programme processes to identify what works well and what could be improved.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 explores the importance of effective parenting, the unique barriers faced by incarcerated parents in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the impacts of imprisonment on both parents and children, highlighting the need for targeted support programmes within the prison system.
- Section 3 provides an overview of the PiP programme, including its practice model, content, referral and assessment processes, and the context of its delivery within correctional facilities.
- Section 4 gives an overview of the evaluation's scope, methodology, objectives, and theoretical frameworks underpinning the Value for Money (VfM) approach.
- Section 5 presents the evaluation findings based on data sources including interviews, surveys, and programme documentation.
- Section 6 discusses strategic recommendations to optimise the PiP programme's value, addressing identified gaps and leveraging existing strengths to foster sustainable positive programme outcomes.

## 2.0 Background

Effective parenting plays a vital role in shaping children's development, wellbeing, and life outcomes. A large and growing body of evidence shows that children raised by responsive, consistent, and supportive caregivers are more likely to thrive across multiple domains, including physical health, emotional regulation, education, and social relationships. Conversely, when parenting is compromised by neglect, harsh discipline, or systemic disadvantage, children are at greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes that can persist into adulthood. In this context, parenting support programmes have emerged as a key strategy to enhance parent-child relationships, reduce intergenerational harm, and promote family wellbeing - particularly for families facing adversity.

This chapter examines the rationale, value, and implementation of parenting programmes for incarcerated parents. It begins by reviewing the critical importance of effective parenting during early childhood and the role of structured parenting interventions in supporting families. It then explores the unique challenges faced by parents in prison, including the psychological impacts of incarceration, systemic barriers to parenting, and the disproportionate burden on Māori whānau and children.

The chapter highlights how imprisonment affects not only parents, but also the 17,000 children estimated to be impacted by parental incarceration in Aotearoa New Zealand, with implications for child wellbeing, intergenerational disadvantage, and social outcomes. Finally, the chapter discusses the emerging evidence on parenting programmes within correctional settings - what they aim to achieve, what outcomes they are associated with, and what gaps remain in our understanding of how to implement them effectively. In doing so, this chapter argues that investing in well-designed, culturally responsive parenting programmes for people in prison is a meaningful strategy to support rehabilitation, reduce harm, and break cycles of disadvantage.

### 2.1 Importance of effective parenting

Effective parenting is a critical determinant of a child's developmental trajectory. A substantial body of research shows that positive, responsive, and consistent parenting contributes to better outcomes in children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, educational achievement, and social relationships (Sanders et al., 2014; WHO, 2020). Parenting that is characterised by warmth, clear boundaries, and supportive communication has been consistently linked to improved self-regulation, greater resilience, and reduced risk of behavioural issues in children (Steinberg, 2001; Centre on the Developing Child, 2016). Conversely, parenting characterised by neglect, harsh discipline, or inconsistency has been associated with increased risk of emotional difficulties, substance use, criminal involvement, and poor academic outcomes (Fergusson, Boden, & Horwood, 2013; Afifi et al., 2017). These effects are not only short-term but can extend well into adulthood, influencing employment, mental health, and intergenerational patterns of parenting.

Parenting is especially influential during the early years of life when children's brains are rapidly developing and are highly sensitive to relational environments. High-quality caregiving during this period fosters secure attachment and healthy neural development, laying the

groundwork for lifelong learning and wellbeing (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Britto et al., 2017). Positive parenting practices such as responding to a child's needs with warmth and encouragement, promoting play and exploration, and setting appropriate boundaries help build children's confidence, emotional regulation, and social competence (OECD, 2021). Importantly, interventions that improve parenting skills have been shown to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect, particularly in disadvantaged families (Chen & Chan, 2016). This evidence supports the case for universal and targeted parenting support programmes, with strong potential to reduce inequities and promote positive outcomes for children, families, and society as a whole.

## 2.2 Parenting programmes

Research indicates that parenting and family support programmes can have a meaningful positive impact on both children and their caregivers. It has shown some strong associations between effective parenting and improved child outcomes across domains such as emotional regulation, social competence, and self-control (Shaw, 2014). A 2016 report commissioned by The Benevolent Society found that investing in family and parenting interventions, particularly for developmentally vulnerable children, can improve parent-child interactions and reduce risks associated with poor social and emotional development.

Parenting programmes often do more than benefit children; they also strengthen families and support the personal growth of parents. Studies have shown that parenting education can improve parenting practices, build knowledge of child development, and shift harmful beliefs and behaviours. For example, evaluations of parenting programmes in prison contexts have found improvements in participants' self-esteem, understanding of child development, attitudes towards discipline, and perceptions of family roles (Thompson & Harm, 2000; Showers, 1993). Such programmes also offer secondary benefits, including reductions in parental stress and improved mental wellbeing.

Despite the clear value of parenting skills, not all parents have opportunities to develop them. Many parents in prison come from low socio-economic backgrounds and may have experienced intergenerational disadvantage, trauma, or limited access to formal education and support services. Literacy and numeracy levels are often lower among incarcerated populations, making it less likely that individuals have independently accessed information about parenting or child development.

## 2.3 Parenting while in prison

### New Zealand's prison population

As of March 31, 2025, New Zealand's prison population was 10,680, which includes 3,416 remand prisoners, 5,942 sentences prisoners, 10,520 onsite and 160 onsite. New Zealand prison populations peaked at the beginning of 2018, before dropping nearly 30% by 2022. They have started to rise again through 2025. Women account for 6.1% of New Zealand's total prison population. There are currently 486 women incarcerated across the country's three women's prisons, a decline from the peak of 766 in 2018 (Adair, 2023).

Relative to their numbers in the general population, Māori are over-represented at every stage of the criminal justice process. Though forming just 12.5% of the general population aged 15 and over, 42% of all criminal apprehension involves a person identifying as Māori, as do over 50% of all people in prison.

For Māori women, the picture is even more acute: they comprise around 60% of the female prison population (Adair, 2023). There are currently over 4,000 Māori in prison – six times the number one might otherwise expect.

New Zealand's judicial system contains many prisoners who are parents to one or more children. It is estimated 17,000 children are affected by parental imprisonment (Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou, n.d.). Incarceration profoundly impacts families, disrupting the lives of both parents and children, and influencing future generations through disrupted attachments, the loss of positive role modelling, and the transmission of intergenerational trauma and disadvantage.

### **Barriers to parenting while in prison**

Parenting from prison presents numerous challenges due to institutional policies that limit both the frequency and quality of contact between parents and their children (Dargis & Mitchell-Somoza, 2021). These restrictions vary widely but generally include limited visitation opportunities, monitored communications, and often inconvenient locations far from the family's home (Dargis & Mitchell-Somoza, 2021). Such barriers and costs complicate maintaining relationships. These difficulties are compounded when the incarcerated parent's relationship with the child's caregiver is strained, further obstructing the ability to stay connected. Incarcerated parents with a history of delinquency may struggle to engage in positive parenting due to factors such as their own drug addiction, poverty, or a lack of positive parenting experiences during their own childhood (Norman et al., 2022).

Despite these obstacles, maintaining contact during incarceration is crucial for both parents and children. Consistent communication and visitation can reduce the likelihood of recidivism for parents and provide emotional stability and improved academic outcomes for children. However, these interactions can also be emotionally taxing, sometimes exacerbating pre-existing family conflicts and leading to feelings of shame or stigma.

As briefly outlined, existing research demonstrates that incarcerated parents face numerous challenges and barriers that hinder their ability to maintain strong relationships with their children and practise effective parenting. Equipping these individuals with parenting skills, knowledge, and tools can better support their children, meaning they are less likely to experience negative social and health outcomes later in life.

### **Impacts of prison on parents**

Due to the lack of control and enforced separation from their children, it is understandable that many incarcerated parents experience significant psychological distress alongside prevalent mental health issues in this group (Dargis & Mitchell-Somoza, 2021). Incarcerated parents of young children often report high levels of depression and thought disturbances, including

hallucinations, unusual thoughts, and self-harming behaviours (Milavetz et al., 2021). Mental health symptoms in jailed parents are reported at rates three to five times higher than those in the general population, with a notable presence of comorbid conditions (Milavetz et al., 2021).

Incarceration generally correlates with elevated mental illness rates as parents in prison face distinct psychological challenges (Berry & Eigenberg, 2003). These challenges include anxiety about their children, lack of control due to separation, conflicts with caregivers, custody concerns, transparency about their criminal actions, and fears of losing their parental identity (Arditti & Few, 2008; Houck & Loper, 2002). Such stressors are linked to increased symptoms of depression and anxiety, more frequent incidents of institutional misconduct, and higher self-reported aggression while in prison (Houck & Loper, 2002). Particularly for incarcerated mothers, feelings of disconnection from their children and infrequent contact are major contributors to depressive symptoms (Arditti & Few, 2008).

Another significant stressor impacting the wellbeing of incarcerated parents is their perceived competency in parenting. Low self-perceived parenting abilities are associated with heightened anxiety and depression (Houck & Loper, 2002). Parents who feel less competent in their parenting roles also struggle more with adapting to the prison environment, often displaying higher rates of misconduct (Loper et al., 2009). Overall, existing research indicates many incarcerated parents encounter substantial obstacles that impact their overall wellbeing and their ability to parent effectively.

### **Impacts of prison on children**

Children whose parents have been imprisoned are often considered to be the 'hidden victims' of crime (Jardine, 2018). Parental incarceration has far-reaching consequences that extend well beyond the prison walls, profoundly affecting the lives of children left behind (Herreros-Fraile et al., 2023).

Parental incarceration can adversely affect children's immediate emotional wellbeing and their long-term health and social outcomes (Beresford et al., 2020). These children often face a multitude of challenges, including psychological and emotional distress, behavioural problems, academic difficulties, economic hardship, and social stigma (Beresford et al., 2020). The absence of a parent due to incarceration disrupts the family structure, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of abandonment among children. Additionally, the financial strain and social isolation resulting from a parent's imprisonment further exacerbate these issues, making it crucial to address the unique needs of these vulnerable children.

Children will experience parental incarceration under various circumstances, and their responses can often differ depending on several factors. These include which parent is incarcerated, previous living arrangements, the quality of the parent-child relationship prior to incarceration, the child's age at the time, the nature and duration of the sentence, alternative care arrangements, contact with the incarcerated parent, how other family members cope, and the broader social context (Murray et al., 2012; Murray & Farrington, 2008). Notably, separation from a mother is particularly distressing for children, often leading to significant disruptions as it typically involves changes in caregivers, home environments, and schools

(Beresford et al., 2020). Children with incarcerated mothers frequently live with grandparents, who may also require practical and financial assistance to provide adequate care.

Parental incarceration is also associated with higher risk of intergenerational offending (Superu, 2015). The children of prisoners are more likely than the general population to have grown up in an environment in which anti-social or illegal behaviours are normalised and regularly modelled to children.

The Longitudinal Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development followed two subsequent generations from an original cohort and found that family criminality was an important predictor of criminal and anti-social behaviour (Farrington, 1995). In addition to parental incarceration, other significant risk factors for offending that persist across generations include harsh discipline, inadequate parental supervision, family disruption, low family income, large family size, substandard housing, poor educational attainment, risk-taking behavior, and antisocial tendencies (Superu, 2015).

The pervasive influence of parental incarceration and related risk factors on children's development underscores the critical need for effective support and interventions that can help address the cycle of intergenerational offending. Parenting programmes offer one such avenue of support, as they are specifically designed to tackle both the challenges of parenting during incarceration and the broader issues that might threaten successful reintegration.

### **Interventions for parents in prison**

Parenting programmes have been identified as a way to reduce the negative effects of parental incarceration on families and children (Troy et al., 2018). The aims of programmes vary but generally seek to improve outcomes by enhancing parenting skills, strengthening family relationships, minimising the negative effects of imprisonment on children and adults, and reducing the risks of reoffending (Butler et al., 2019). In addition, programmes may address the specific challenges of parenting during incarceration, aiming to equip parents with the necessary skills and strategies for positive engagement with their children, families, and communities after release. This involves tackling factors that could impede successful reintegration, such as avoiding abusive or negative relationships, steering clear of drug and alcohol misuse, dealing with past trauma, and acquiring life skills like job training and employment (Kjellstrand et al., 2012).

In recent years, a growing body of evidence has shown that parenting programmes can be effective in changing parenting attitudes and behaviours, enhancing parental mental health, and addressing children's social, emotional, and behavioural challenges (Troy et al., 2018). Interventions have been associated with positive outcomes in various areas, including enhanced parent-child interactions, increased parenting knowledge, empathy, reduced parental stress, greater child contact, active parenting, and cooperation with other caregivers (Norman & Enebrink, 2020).

For incarcerated parents, parenting programmes can play a crucial role in helping them build and maintain strong relationships despite being separated from their children and families. Strengthening family bonds is essential, as it has been linked to improved prisoner reintegration, a lower risk of recidivism, and better outcomes for both children and families

(Arditti, 2005; Troy et al., 2018). Additionally, parenting interventions have been linked to improved child behaviour and a potential reduction in parental recidivism (Norman & Enebrink, 2020). Consequently, funding for parenting in prison programmes could have multiple advantages not only for the children of prisoners, but for offenders themselves and society more broadly (Troy et al., 2018).

Given the potential benefits, there is increasing interest in optimising the design and delivery of parenting programmes within prison environments. While research has extensively explored the effectiveness of these programmes, understanding the mechanisms behind their successful implementation in prisons remains limited. In contrast to the general population, where barriers and facilitators are well-documented (McPherson et al., 2017; Whittaker & Cowley, 2012), prison-based programmes lack comprehensive data on implementation processes and stakeholder experiences (Troy et al., 2018). This knowledge gap is exacerbated by the lack of a standardised definition for parenting programmes and insufficient empirical evidence on their evaluation and outcomes. Consequently, understanding the most effective interventions and the conditions necessary for their success remains weak. The issue is not confined to prison settings but also extends to other stages, including community and post-release programmes.

PSN's PiP programme was developed in response to the well-established links between effective parenting, child wellbeing, and intergenerational outcomes. Incarcerated parents face significant and often compounding barriers to practising and developing parenting skills, including trauma, limited child contact, low self-efficacy, and systemic disadvantage. Yet, with the right support, parenting interventions can strengthen family relationships, reduce harm, and support successful reintegration.

Despite promising international and local evidence, there remains limited understanding of how parenting programmes operate in New Zealand's prison context - particularly from the perspectives of those delivering and participating in them. This evaluation seeks to address these gaps by exploring how the PSN programme is experienced, what outcomes it supports, and what conditions enable or constrain its effectiveness, with the goal of informing improvements in programme design, delivery, and long-term impact.

## 3.0 Family Works Parenting in Prison Programme

### 3.1 Programme overview

The Parenting in Prison Programme (PiP) is currently delivered by Family Works Northern (FWN). It was introduced in 2015 and is delivered in partnership with Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections (DoC) as part of their broader 'parenting suite' that includes Brainwaves <sup>3</sup> and Storytime Dads <sup>4</sup>. Participants generally can take part in all three programmes. The initial order is currently in consistently applied, and not all PIP clients attend the other programmes.

Corrections have emphasised parenting programmes are a vital part of their rehabilitation efforts, aiming to break the cycle of reoffending and support successful reintegration into society. The programmes aim to enhance the parenting abilities of incarcerated individuals, build and sustain relationships, and increase their awareness of community networks that can support their ongoing parenting and family needs (Department of Corrections, n.d.). The group-based programs focus on fostering pro-social values and behaviours essential for effective parenting.

### 3.2 Family Works Northern practice model

FWN solutions is a practice model that guides practitioner's work with clients. It focuses on strengths and unmet needs of the client through a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach, while also recognising the voice of the child and role of the whānau. Practitioners have a suite of assessment forms and recording processes that align with Family Solutions that allow them to follow the best pathway(s) identified for the client. At the core of the Family Solutions Practice model is goal-setting, giving the clients a voice across seven domains that include: Safety and Care, Basic Needs, Wellbeing, Parenting, Belonging and Relationships, Learning and Achievement and Community. The PiP programme is strongly linked to this model with the main focus orientated towards the parenting and wellbeing domains.



Figure 1 – Family solutions model underpinning Family Works Northern.

<sup>3</sup> To find out more about programme use the following [Brainwaves](#) link

<sup>4</sup> To find out more about programme use the following [Storytime Dads](#) link

### 3.3 Programme content

The Family Works PiP programme consists of seven two-hour sessions (14 hours in total) that are typically delivered over a one-week period in community and prison-based settings. The programme looks to strengthen whanaungatanga and offers practical parenting skills, including using rewards and consequences, setting clear expectations, and building supportive relationships. It aims to boost parenting confidence, enhance communication with children, and help maintain relationships post-release. Participants receive guidance on accessing community parenting support and improving co-parenting skills. Facilitators tailor the programme to individual needs, including assisting those under protection orders with post-release access. The programme is structured as follows:

- **Session One:** Introduction to the programme, group rules and outline foundations for successful parenting. Migration of identity worksheet.
- **Session Two:** Modelling behaviour 'children see, children do' and 'how to play with your child'.
- **Session Three:** Modelling behaviour Part 2 and parenting styles.
- **Session Four:** Positive attention, encouragement, praise and rewards. Making cards for children.
- **Session Five:** Ages and stages of development and 'shaken baby syndrome'.
- **Session Six:** The teenage brain and managing challenging behaviours.
- **Session Seven:** Future planning and the Tree of Life.

### 3.4 Programme pathways

Corrections initially promotes the training and identifies potential participants for the programme, who then meet with PSN staff before it begins. Flyers are distributed to potential participants (see Appendix A). These pre-course assessments are essential, allowing staff to engage participants, encourage attendance, and address potential barriers. DoC staff members (Learning Intervention Delivery Managers, Intervention Co-ordinators and Case Managers) alongside Family Works programme facilitators assess the suitability of each participant to undertake the parenting programme. Selecting appropriate individuals ensures an effective and balanced group dynamic. Family Works practitioners and DoC staff work together to find a suitable time once enough individuals have been identified for the programme. In some cases, this can be delayed due to insufficient numbers or staffing shortages. If participants are deemed suitable, the facilitator will follow up and inform Corrections staff / participants with the times, dates and locations of the programme. In practice, few applicants are turned away. A participant can be deemed unsuitable for the following reasons:

- Not being a parent of a child aged 0-18
- Any sexual offending against children
- Being unmotivated to attend

### **3.5 Programme delivery**

The PiP programme is delivered across the upper North Island in the following prisons: Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF); Mt Eden Corrections Facility (MECF); Northland Region Corrections Facility (NRCF); Auckland Prison (Paremoremo); Spring Hill Corrections Facility (SHCF); Tongariro Prison and Waikeria Prison.

### **3.6 Programme facilitators**

Family Works practitioners bring a diverse range of professional skills to their roles, drawing on backgrounds in social work, counselling, psychology, and family support. They are trained in trauma-informed, strengths-based, and culturally responsive approaches, enabling them to work effectively with individuals and whānau facing complex and often intergenerational challenges. Regular supervision and reflective practice are embedded into their roles to ensure safe, ethical, and high-quality service delivery, while also supporting practitioner wellbeing and continuous professional development.

## 4.0 Approach and Methods

This section provides a brief overview of the evaluation methodology used for the PiP programme evaluation. It outlines the key components of the approach, including data collection methods and site and sample selection, and serves as a record of the design used to assess the programmes implementation, effectiveness, and value for money.

### 4.1 Evaluation objectives and questions

#### *Evaluation objectives*

1. *Determine how well resources are being used and whether this is justified by the value created through the PiP programme.*
2. *Explore the short-term and medium-term outcomes of clients, families and whānau participating in the PiP programme.*
3. *Assess programme processes to identify what works well and could be improved.*

#### *Evaluation questions*

- a) *How does the Parenting in Prison programme create value?*
- b) *To what extent does the Parenting in Prison programme provide good value for the resources invested?*
- c) *How could the Parenting in Prison programme provide more value for the resources invested?*

### 4.2 Approach for the Value for Money (VfM) evaluation

#### **About the Value for Money framework**

The evaluation draws on the aspects of the Value for Money (VfM) framework which is an internationally utilised evaluation approach aimed at clearly assessing how effectively resources are used, determining whether sufficient value is generated, and identifying opportunities to enhance the value derived from investments in policies or programmes. It is guided by four foundational principles: it is interdisciplinary, integrating theoretical and practical insights from economics and evaluation; employs mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative data; relies on evaluative reasoning, using clearly defined criteria and standards for interpreting evidence; and embraces a participatory approach, involving stakeholders directly in the evaluation design and interpretation processes.

The VfM approach typically follows an eight-step process, structured around four steps focused on evaluation design and four dedicated to evaluation implementation (see Figure 2). These steps collectively help to build a common understanding of the programme, clearly define evaluation criteria and standards, specify the necessary evidence, and systematically undertake evidence collection, analysis, synthesis, and reporting. This structured method evaluates the overall value created by a programme, which includes, but extends beyond, achieving its planned outputs and outcomes.

These steps helped:

- Define how the Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme creates value, and for whom
- Define what good value would look like for the resources put in
- Organise evidence of performance and value
- Interpret the evidence on an agreed basis
- Present a clear and robust performance story

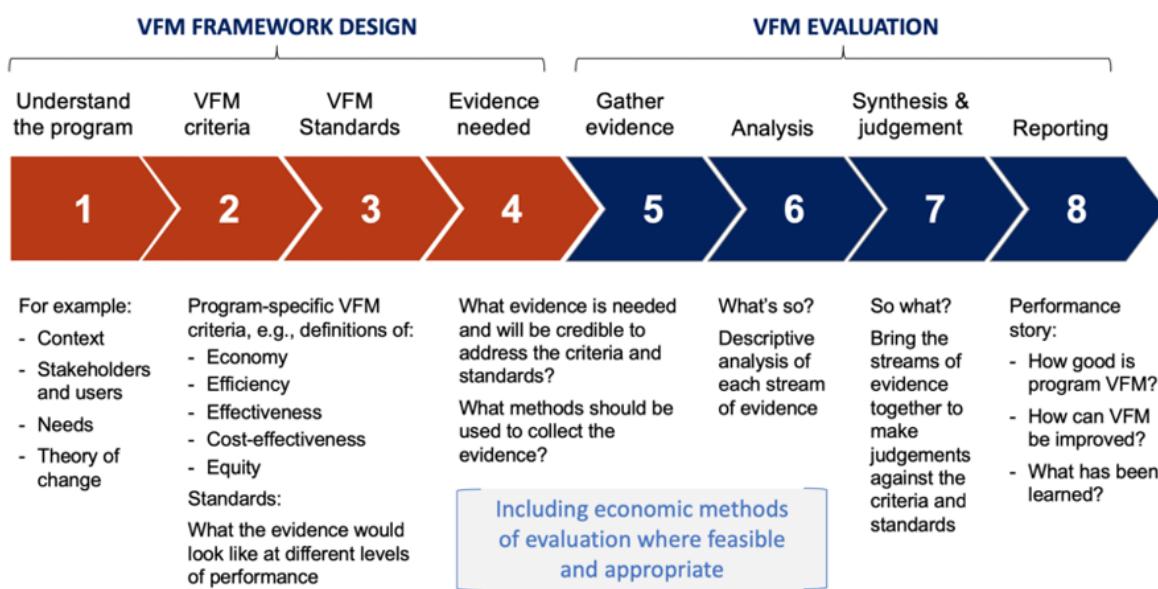


Figure 2 – Value for Money (VfM) evaluation approach (King, 2020).

## Criteria and standards

Evaluation rubrics provide a transparent way of making evaluative judgements, by explicitly identifying how well the programme is expected to perform against key criteria (aspects of performance) and standards (levels of performance).<sup>5</sup> Rubrics provide a way of presenting agreed definitions of quality and value at different levels of development. Essentially, the evaluation criteria and standards provide the key road map for the evaluation. For this evaluation, several hui were conducted with key stakeholders to help identify the criteria and standards for the three levels of value creation of the FWN PiP programme which is outlined in more depth shortly. Through this collaborative process, a detailed set of criteria and standards were developed and refined which were then used to guide all evaluative judgements. Programme specific criteria were established for effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and equity (see below):

- **Effectiveness** – The PiP programme achieves its intended outcomes by improving parenting skills, strengthening family relationships and enhancing motivation to be a better parent. It is an effective programme leading to positive changes in parenting knowledge and skills, child/family relationships and connections, and client wellbeing,

<sup>5</sup> See the full breakdown of the rubrics used in this evaluation in Appendix G.

contributing to safer and more connected communities, positive intergenerational outcomes and a reduced load on government resources.

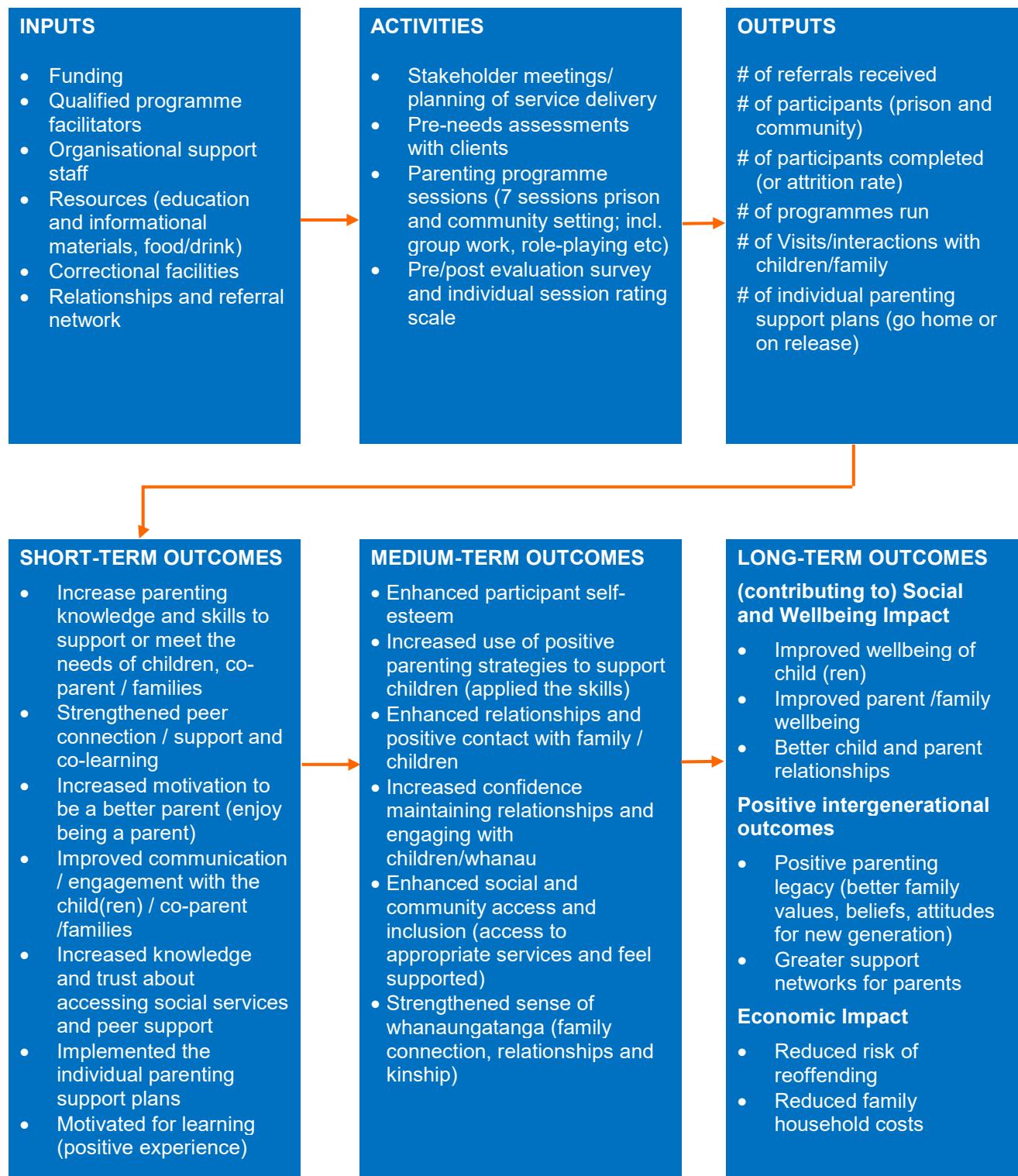
- **Efficiency** - The PiP programme delivers intended quality and quantity of outputs with available resources, ensuring that funding, staffing and time are used optimally. The programme operates within prison and community settings, balancing quality, scale, and accessibility while minimising waste and/or duplication.
- **Relevance** - The PiP programme meets the specific needs and goals of parents. It is understanding of parents lived experiences, addresses barriers to parenting in prison, and remains responsive to cultural, social and systemic dimensions.
- **Equity** - The PiP programme is accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive to all participants, particularly those facing significant barriers e.g., Māori and Pasifika.

In addition, a set of performance standards was established guided by relevant literature and research pertaining to the VfM approach. Performance standards provide a benchmark for determining the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of delivery. These set out the evidence required at different levels of performance.

Performance standard	Definition
Excellent	Programme-specific description
Good	Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent
Adequate	Programme-specific description
Insufficient	Below the adequate level outlined in the criterion.

Table 1 – Definitions of the value for money performance standards

### 4.3 Theory of change



## 4.4 PiP value proposition

The value proposition is closely aligned with the Value for Money (VfM) framework, specifying how a programme or service aims to utilise its resources efficiently and effectively to generate adequate value, thus justifying the resources allocated. It sets out a chain of logic that proposes how resources (funding, expertise, relationships, etc) are transformed into significant social value.<sup>6</sup> It posits that if the initiative looks after resources, equitably and economically, so that services are delivered, equitably and efficiently, the initiative will meet its value proposition by generating social value, equitably and effectively. The following section provides an overview of the PiP value proposition across three distinct levels with associated broad value criteria for each.

### a) Efficient and equitable management of resources

This level of the value proposition is focused on the efficient and equitable use of resources. For this programme, that includes a service design that values the voices and experiences of parents, ensuring their perspectives inform programme delivery. It also recognises the importance of the existing infrastructure of PSN and DoC, including the expertise and experience of practitioners and staff.

- Funding and accountability
- Equitable and efficient service design
- Stakeholder support and programme alignment.

### b) Programme delivery is equitable, relevant and efficient

This level of the value proposition is primarily concerned with the delivery of the programme, ensuring that it is undertaken in an equitable, relevant, and efficient way. This is achieved by valuing of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori; utilising evidence-informed programme content; adapting the programme to meet the needs of participants when applicable and identifying and removing barriers to engagement and participation.

- Adaptable and equitable programme delivery
- Culturally responsive approach
- Relevant and effective approach

### c) Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities and society

This level of value proposition is focused primarily on the changes that are being achieved in the short- to medium-term that will indicate whether the PiP is creating value in the longer term. Through working with parents involved with DoC, the PiP programme support participants to build confidence, and motivation to be better parents/co-parents and enhance children/family wellbeing. It seeks to equip parents with the knowledge, skills and support they

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<sup>6</sup> While economic evaluation methods like cost-benefit analysis are sometimes used in value for money (VfM) approaches, they are not always required, appropriate, or practical. Rather than being a single method, VfM is best understood as a guiding framework - built on key principles and a reflective, adaptive process. It encourages evaluators to thoughtfully select and apply a suitable combination of methods, tools, and expertise tailored to the context of the evaluation. Economic methods were not included because the evaluation prioritised a flexible, context-driven approach over rigid cost-based metrics, recognising that not all outcomes are easily quantifiable in monetary terms.

need to be parents. Over the long-term this can support positive intergenerational change, recidivism efforts, and safer, more connected communities and less burden on the state.

- Parents experience improved outcomes
- Support networks and community inclusion
- Children and families experience improved outcomes
- Effective use of resource use for rehabilitation and reintegration
- Long-term social and economic benefits.

## 4.5 Data management, analysis and reporting

### **Data collection<sup>7</sup>**

This evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach combining direct observation, post-programme interviews and surveys. Integrating multiple data sources, it sought to capture a holistic view of the programme's impact on parenting practices and the experiences of clients, facilitators and correctional staff.

#### *Interviews*

Programme participants were drawn from sites which had completed a course within the last three-six months. Additional considerations in site selection included regional spread, course delivery format (one or two weeks), feasibility of travel, and time required on-site for researcher induction, course observation, and interviews.

#### *Programme observation*

A programme observation was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how the parenting programme was delivered in practice, including facilitator approaches, participant engagement, and group dynamics. Observations focused on both content and process, capturing contextual factors that may influence implementation and outcomes. Field notes were recorded systematically using a structured observation template.

#### *Survey*

The evaluation distributed a survey to FWN facilitators that supported the delivery of the PiP programme. Additionally, a survey was distributed to DoC staff involved with the PiP programme. It was initially sent to Learning and Intervention Managers, Coordinators, and Corrections staff, who then circulated it more widely among other relevant Corrections personnel.

#### *Document review*

The programme document review looked at key materials used in the design and delivery of the PiP programme. These included facilitator manuals, session plans, and evaluation at closure (EAC) data.

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<sup>7</sup> For the full programme observation, survey and interview questionnaires, please see the Appendices.

## Data analysis

Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, and interview transcripts or raw data could only be accessed by the Evaluation team before reporting as aggregate data. All qualitative interviews were audio-recorded and uploaded to Otter.ai for transcription. Transcripts were reviewed and coded thematically, with key information extracted and mapped against the evaluation rubrics. This allowed for a systematic assessment of participant experiences and outcomes across the defined criteria. Quantitative data from the facilitator and practitioner survey was analysed, with key findings complementing the qualitative insights gathered through the interviews and programme observation. Together, these data sources were triangulated to inform an overall judgement of the programme's value for money. The final interpretation and conclusion utilised a sensemaking review process with PSN stakeholders to better understand the finding and to explore areas of further improvement and recommendations

## Ethics

This evaluation has been conducted in line with the Presbyterian Support Northern Research and Evaluation Ethics Policy.

Participation in the evaluation must be completely voluntary. It is important that participants are able to give informed consent before participating.

Participants were informed of:

- how the evaluation was to be carried out
- the purpose of the evaluation
- how their information was going to be used
- how their privacy and confidentiality would be protected.

To ensure that these requirements were met, all participants were provided with a participant information sheet and consent form. These were signed and returned to the researcher prior to any interviews. Clients also consented for the researchers to observe one session of the pilot group. To ensure anonymity, researchers avoided recording identifiable behaviours or taking any photos unless consent was given.

## Limitations

- **Small sample size:** The number of participants in this evaluation was limited, which reduces the robustness of the findings and means that results should be interpreted with caution. A larger sample size would have allowed for more confident generalisations about the programme's effectiveness.
- **Lack of longitudinal insights:** The evaluation provides a cross-sectional snapshot of participants' experiences while in prison, without the ability to follow individuals post-release. As a result, it is not possible to assess longer-term outcomes such as sustained parenting changes, family reunification, or child wellbeing.

- **Absence of formal economic analysis:** Although the evaluation was guided by a value for money (VfM) lens, it did not incorporate economic tools such as cost-benefit analysis or cost-effectiveness analysis. This limits the ability to quantify financial returns or establish monetary figures of the programme's comparative key outcomes.
- **Exclusion of co-parents and whānau:** The perspectives of co-parents, caregivers, and wider family members were not included in the evaluation. This reliance solely on participants' accounts may introduce bias and provides a limited view of the programme's impact on broader relationships and wellbeing.

## 5.0 Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation, structured to address the key evaluation objectives and questions. Drawing on data collected through interviews, surveys, observations, and document review, the analysis is guided by a set of rubrics developed to assess programme performance across core domains. The findings highlight how the PiP programme is functioning in practice, and the extent to which it is delivering value for money.

### 5.1 Evaluation participants

#### **Parents**

A total of 13 interviews were conducted, meeting the planned target of 10-15 participants. Interview participants included both male and female participants from a range of low- and medium-security prison facilities (see Table 2).<sup>8</sup>

Programme Participants	Participated in Interview	Declined to Participate
Auckland Regional Women's Corrections Facility (AWRCF)	5	3
Mt Eden Corrections Facility (MECF)	4	2
Spring Hill Corrections Facility (SHCF)	4	2
Total	13	7

Table 2 – Interview sites and number of parents

Among the 13 parents interviewed, 38.5% identified as female (n = 5) and 61.5% as male (n = 8) (see Table 3).

Individual Level Variables	Number of Participants (N=13)
Gender	
Female	5
Male	8

Table 3 – Demographic characteristics of parents at the individual level

The evaluation distributed two surveys to DoC and FWN facilitators. In total, 17 responses were received with seven from DoC and 10 from PiP practitioners.

<sup>8</sup> Additional consideration was initially given to including participants from Paremoremo Maximum Security Prison via Microsoft Teams, due to health and safety constraints and the lack of upcoming in-person programmes; however, this option was not pursued.

	Completed	Response Rate
Department of Corrections Staff	7	N/A <sup>9</sup>
Family Works Northern Facilitators	10	77%
Total	17	N/A

Table 4 – Survey response rate and number of participants

### **DoC staff**

Among the seven participants, 86% were female (n = 6) and 14% were male (n = 1). Ethnicities included Māori (43%), New Zealand European (29%), Asian (14%), and Other European (14%). Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 64 years, with the largest proportion in the 45–54 age group (n = 3, 43%).

Individual Level Variables	Number of Participants (N=7)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	6
Male	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Māori	3
New Zealand European	2
Asian	1
Other European	1
<b>Age Group</b>	
25–34 years	1
35–44 years	2
45–54 years	3
55–64 years	1

Table 5 – Demographic characteristics and programme involvement of DoC staff survey respondents

The DoC staff surveyed were primarily in learning and delivery roles, with most having over two years of experience delivering the PiP programme. Programme delivery was spread across multiple prison sites, including the Auckland Regional Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF), Spring Hill Correctional Facility (SHCF), and Tongariro Prison. The data reflects a cohort with long-standing engagement and support in the delivery of the PiP programme.

<sup>9</sup> It was uncertain how many DoC staff were invited to participate in the survey.

Individual level variables	Number of participants (n=7)
<b>Length of Involvement with the PiP Programme</b>	
6–12 months	1
1–2 years	1
Longer than 2 years	5
<b>Prison Site(s) Supported</b>	
Auckland Regional Women's Correctional Facility	2
Spring Hill Corrections Facility	2
Mt Eden Corrections Facility	1
Northland Region Corrections Facility	1
Tongariro Prison	1
<b>Current Role</b>	
Learning Interventions and Delivery Manager or Coordinator	5
Case Manager	1
Interventions Coordinator	1

Table 6 – Demographic characteristics and programme involvement of PiP Staff Survey Respondents

### ***FWN practitioners***

FWN practitioners held diverse roles including counsellors, social workers, and team leaders. Their involvement ranged from under six months to over two years, with most having delivered the programme across multiple prison sites. The most frequently reported delivery locations included SHCF, NRCF, and Waikeria Prisons. This data highlights the breadth of delivery experience and widespread geographic reach among community-based facilitators.

Individual level variables	Number of participants
<b>Current Role</b>	
Counsellor	3
Family Worker	1
Manager / Team Leader	3
Social Worker	3
<b>Length of Involvement in PiP Programme</b>	
Less than 6 months	1
6–12 months	3
1–2 years	2
Longer than 2 years	4
<b>Prison Site(s) Delivered<sup>10</sup></b>	
Spring Hill Corrections Facility	4
Northland Region Corrections Facility	3
Auckland Region Women's Correctional Facility	2
Tongariro Prison	3
Waikeria Prison	3
Auckland Prison	1
Mt Eden Corrections Facility	1

Table 7 – Roles, experience and prison sites delivered by Family Works Northern staff

<sup>10</sup> Total count reflects all reported delivery sites across respondents; individuals may have delivered the programme at more than one site.

## 5.2 Findings – How is value created

The following section briefly describes how PiP delivers value in an overall sense through the lens of the value proposition. The evaluation found that the PiP programme created value by transforming existing resources into meaningful outcomes for incarcerated parents, their children, whānau, and the wider community.

The programme looks after resources **efficiently and equitably** by making smart, relational use of existing systems and workforce capability to deliver targeted support in a structurally constrained environment.

- It leverages resources and established infrastructure, partnerships, and relationships across PSN and DoC to deliver an effective programme.
- It draws on skilled trained facilitators, often with lived and/or cultural experience, bring credibility and relational strength, enabling efficient use of personnel and time.
- PiP operates in a group format to maximise participant reach and cost-effectiveness. The programme design does not focus on resource intensive one-on-one delivery and instead emphasises high-quality relational facilitation.

Programme delivery is **equitable, relevant and efficient** and is responsive to the complex realities of incarcerated parents.

- The group-based format is a core strength that provides opportunities for peer connection, shared learning, and normalisation of parenting struggles, which help to reduce isolation and build confidence.
- The programme is designed and delivered in a way that acknowledges, and respects participants lived experiences, including the disconnection and challenges faced by incarcerated parents.
- Facilitators work to build trust and safety in each group. Their ability to build rapport with participants and create a safe space was frequently cited as key to programme effectiveness.
- PiP supports a diverse range of parents with different backgrounds, parenting experiences and situations.

The programme **effectively generates social value** for parents, children, whānau, communities and society by restoring parenting identity, enhancing family connection, and fostering hope - foundations for intergenerational wellbeing and reintegration.

- Participants report increased self-esteem but also stronger self-belief and motivation to be more effective and present parents. They develop practical parenting tools, emotional regulation strategies, and a clearer understanding of their children's needs.
- Parents strengthen their connections with their children and whānau through letter writing, deep reflection on existing relationships with their co-parent, children and family, and planning for parenting differently post-release.
- Parents gain a renewed hope for their future and sense of purpose. The programme is often viewed as a key inflection point in their rehabilitation journey, helping them to see beyond cycles of trauma and/or disconnection.
- The PiP programme supports broader rehabilitation and reintegration efforts with parents gaining a deeper understanding of the intergenerational impacts of incarceration on children and families.

### 5.3 Findings – Extent of value created against each criteria

The following section now explores in greater depth how the PiP programme creates value by examining its delivery against the established evaluation criteria. It outlines the value creation domains and corresponding criteria, which are discussed in detail throughout the section.

Evaluation criteria			
<b>Looking after resources efficiently and equitably</b>	Funding and accountability	Equitable and efficient service delivery	Stakeholder support and programme alignment
<b>Programme delivery is equitable, relevant and efficient</b>	Adaptable and equitable programme delivery	Culturally responsive approaches	Relevant and effective content
<b>Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities and society</b>	Parents experience improved outcomes	Support networks and inclusion in the community	Children and families experience improved outcomes
	Effective use of resource for rehabilitation and reintegration	Contribution to long-term social outcomes	

Table 8 – PiP value proposition and their associated criteria

### Efficient and Equitable Management of Resources

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Funding and Accountability	Regular monitoring and evaluation of programme performance	Adequate	Basic M&E carried out although findings not systematically used to inform programme development. Internal feedback loops could be further enhanced to facilitate information sharing and programme development
	Delivery is well-resourced and meets its intended outputs	Good	Programmes are facilitated by qualified staff and consistently meet their intended output requirements. PiP meets existing demand with room for further programmes to be added for some prison sites.

Table 9 – Funding and accountability evaluative judgement

The PiP programme has embedded some regular monitoring and evaluation to track programme performance; however, is not actively drawn on to drive learning, innovation and

ongoing programme improvement. Existing evaluation is typically carried out using the pre- and post-programme Evaluation At Closure (EAC) forms that are distributed by the FWN facilitators. These forms consist of open-ended questions where participants can share feedback and a series of Likert scale questions that collect information on the following: parenting knowledge and understanding, skill development and application, awareness of support services, safety and wellbeing, and overall programme satisfaction.

The data collected through the EAC forms offers some useful insights into the Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme but does not cover key areas such as anticipated impacts on children, barriers to applying parenting skills (e.g. restraining orders or long prison sentences), or the programme's cultural relevance and inclusiveness. Additionally, the insights that are collected are not consistently shared with the service delivery team, limiting the flow of important information and hindering ongoing programme development and improvement.

The current evaluation is the first in-depth research since inception and an improved monitoring, evaluation and learning process would likely contribute to improvements in the programme content and delivery processes. This evaluation found some FWN facilitators experienced difficulties relaying and actioning feedback they had on different aspects of the programme, for example, course facilitation instructions:

*“Some of the structure/content of the sessions, there are some things in the format of the manual that simply don’t make sense or go together/flow well, [...]. I would like to see some consultation with facilitators to change some things in the manual. I have previously tried to share my thoughts on this.”*  
*[FWN Facilitator]*

The current funding arrangement between PSN and DoC enables courses to be run across multiple correctional facilities across the upper North Island. However, key stakeholder groups often view existing scheduling as insufficient to meet demand across some sites (see Figure 3). However, it is important to note that some prisons struggle to obtain sufficient numbers of clients for the scheduled sessions. Despite this, the programme is regularly delivered as intended and is supported by qualified and competent facilitators. While the existing funding enables regular delivery of the programme at multiple locations in the upper North Island, survey data indicates concerns about limited availability. Eight practitioners and Corrections staff reported that the number of programmes offered is inadequate. As one Department of Corrections staff member noted:

*“The need and the want of this programme is in high demand; we are not able to provide enough programmes... this may come down to funding.”*  
*[DoC Staff]*

*“The more cohorts that can be provided to women in prison the more advantageous it would be for them.”* *[DoC Staff]*

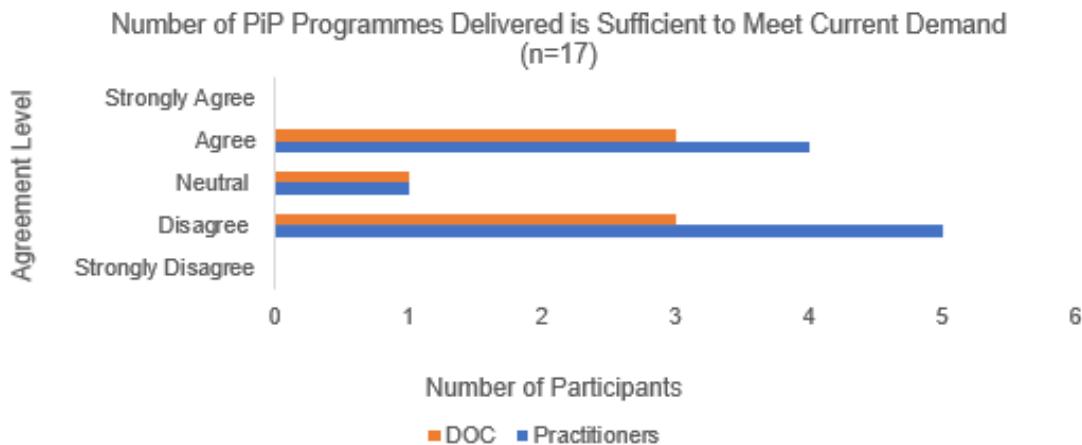


Figure 3 – Level of agreement among PSN facilitators and Department of Corrections staff on whether the number of PiP programmes delivered meets current demand.

The PiP programme regularly meets intended outputs with programmes being delivered and the majority of participants completing all sessions<sup>11</sup>. In addition, EAC data shows the majority of participants agreed they had gained new parenting knowledge and skills and developed a deeper understanding of their role as a parent (see Figure 4).<sup>12</sup> This aligns with the interview findings which will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections.

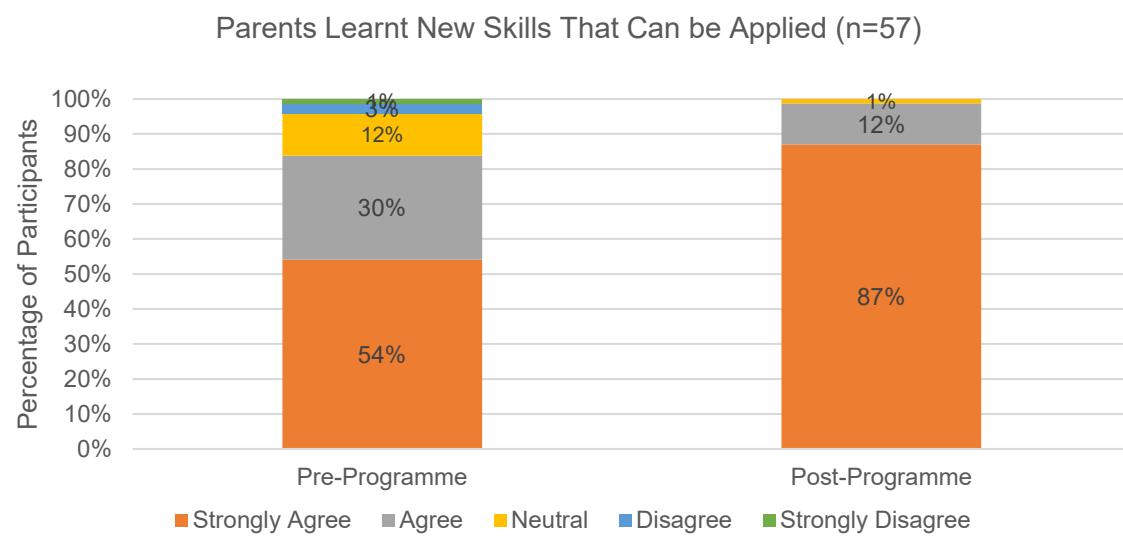


Figure 4 – EAC data showing participant level of agreement on gaining new parenting skills that can be applied

<sup>11</sup> Based on Evaluation At Closure (EAC) data for FY25 Q2 & Q3 period.

<sup>12</sup> Pre-programme question asked participants if they felt they needed to learn new parenting skills. Post-programme questions asked participants if they had learnt new skills for when they next spend time with their children.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgements
Equitable and efficient service delivery	Lived experience of parents valued and incorporated	Excellent	Participants report programme actively validates and respects their lived experiences as parents creating an equitable and effective learning environment. Facilitators observed actively validating parents lives and situations creating an equitable and safe learning environment.
	Utilises existing infrastructure, partnerships and relationships to maximise resources	Good	DoC and FWN generally partner well to utilise existing correctional facilities. Communication breakdown occurs at times due to difficulties and constraints of running programmes in a correctional environment.
	Participant engagement	Good	Parents are generally strongly engaged and participating fully in programmes across prison sites. Although minor issues with pacing and the condensed nature of programme impact some parent's attention and level of engagement.

Table 10 – Equitable and efficient service delivery evaluative judgement

Participants overwhelmingly felt that their personal lived parenting experiences were heard and respected through PiP. Parents valued being seen as parents first, not just prisoners. Many noted that group discussions and activities centred on their real lives and children, which immediately built trust and relevance. A key activity frequently mentioned involved participants writing their children's names on a board. This was a profound experience that brought the class together.

*“Your guards had to come straight down... If you’re gonna put your guards down for somebody, it should be for your kids.” [Parent]*

Others echoed this sentiment citing that hearing peers' stories reassured they weren't alone in their struggles. Facilitators created deliberate space for personal storytelling and emotional vulnerability. These findings indicate indicating the programme created a rare space for honest parenting conversations that was built on the lived experiences of participants. A facilitator praised how the course:

*“Engage[s] participants, discuss real life experiences, share stories and involve all participants.” [FWN Facilitator]*

Operating within the Corrections environment means programme delivery encounters a number of structural barriers and limitations, requiring considerable flexibility and partnerships built on a shared mission and purpose. The evaluation found that the PiP programme utilises prison infrastructure effectively with existing stakeholder relationships (DoC & FWN) underpinned by a mutual respect. Survey results show DoC and FWN are

generally communicating and partnering well to deliver the programme. It was found that 15 out of 17 respondents agreed that the DoC and facilitators partnered well in delivering the PiP programme (see

Figure 5). Although there was one instance where a DoC staff member found the partnership was not working as well as it should.

*[...] the staff are often unreliable (and) often changes dates of cohorts [...].*  
*[DoC Staff]*

While all Corrections staff agreed or strongly agreed that communication was strong, practitioner responses were more mixed, with four selecting neutral or disagree (see Figure 6). This lower agreement likely reflects the operational challenges of delivering programmes within the prison system, such as staffing shortages and frequent prisoner movements. Nevertheless, during the evaluation DoC staff were observed actively supporting the programme delivery and where possible allowing facilitators to bring in additional learning materials e.g., card-making kits to support engagement and learning outcomes for parents.

*The facilitators are always VERY forgiving, sometimes there may be delays in programmes running due to site pressures etc.* [DoC Staff]

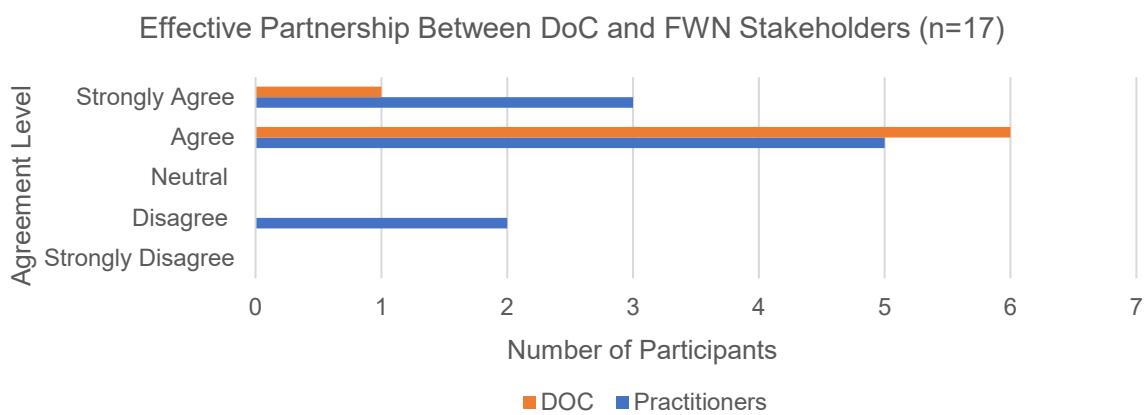


Figure 5 – Survey participants' level of agreement regarding partnership between DoC and FWN

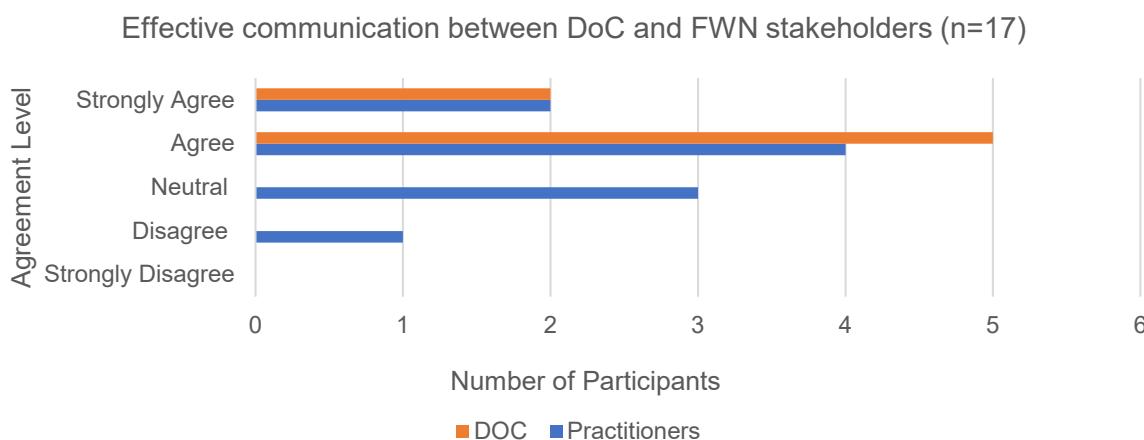


Figure 6 – Survey participants' level of agreement regarding communication between DoC and FWN

The PiP programme's high retention rates and strong engagement and participation throughout the duration of each programme was validated across stakeholder groups. The interviews revealed that many participants, and their peers were fully engaged in the discussions and exercises, while the programme observation saw 'laughter, collaboration, and personal sharing', especially during a hands-on card-making activity, showing genuine involvement and engagement. That said, engagement was not universal at every moment. A few participants admitted initial ambivalence - one was surprised to be put in the class but then thought it was a chance to learn something new. Others observed that a minority of their peers were less invested with some rolling their eyes and just there for the certificate, one participant recalled, which detracted from the group dynamic for them.

Operating within prison introduced structural factors such as unexpected prison events (lockdowns, transfers) that led to drop-outs mid-programme, though these were due to system constraints rather than a lack of participant interest. To counteract this, programmes were often delivered on tight timelines, however, some participants felt the programme was rushed causing some to "check out" during sections of dense content. Overall, attendance and engagement levels were high - most who had the opportunity participated earnestly and completed the course. A supportive atmosphere and interactive activities contributed to this sustained engagement. Minor issues with pacing and a few disengaged individuals prevent a uniformly perfect picture.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Stakeholder support and programme alignment	Key stakeholder groups support and advocate for the programme	Excellent	Broad support and buy-in was observed across all key stakeholder group engaged in the evaluation. PiP was viewed as an essential programme by both Corrections and FWN facilitators and by most parents interviewed.
	Fits with broader Justice, Corrections and social service programme strategies, priorities and goals, ensuring cross-sectoral alignment.	Good	PiP aligns closely with existing DoC and social service efforts and strategies that identify supporting parents and families as a priority. It aligns with internal PSN and FWN strategies that prioritise amplifying the voices of vulnerable persons and addressing their needs. Generally viewed as providing distinctive content although some parents struggled differentiating from other parenting programmes.
	Support/aligns with violence prevention action	Adequate	The PiP programme addresses family violence to some extent and is generally consistent with nationwide prevention initiatives. However, its approach and content are not specifically tailored to reflect the gendered nature of family violence. Parents' responses to this component were mixed, with both mothers and fathers at times finding it either too confronting or not relevant to their circumstances

Table 11 – Stakeholder support and programme alignment evaluative judgement

There is evidence of broad support for PiP across key stakeholder groups. Corrections internal stakeholders like case managers, unit officers, and probation officers commonly promote and actively support the facilitation of the programme. Many participants attributed their enrolment to such stakeholders:

*“My case manager put me onto it.”*

*“Oranga Tamariki and probation wanted me to do a parenting programme.”*

The evaluation found key government agencies view parenting programmes as valuable and are actively referring parents to them. DoC and practitioners overwhelmingly agreed that PiP was as essential programme offered to prisoners with only one individual disagreeing with this position (see

Figure 7).

*“It is a really valuable programme that in my experience always gains great feedback and generates positive feedback.” [FWN Facilitator]*

Staff reiterated their support for the programme with one DoC staff member stating:

*“Thank you for your services! With the majority prison muster being Māori this will support wāhine Māori to aspire and achieve their parenting goals. It's also very supportive for them while they are in prison and away from their tamariki, they will be missing them so much and this programme will be extra support for them. Nga mihi!”*

Overall, the evaluation found strong stakeholder endorsement of PiP – it is encouraged as part of case plans, integrated with probation requirements, and valued by most staff.

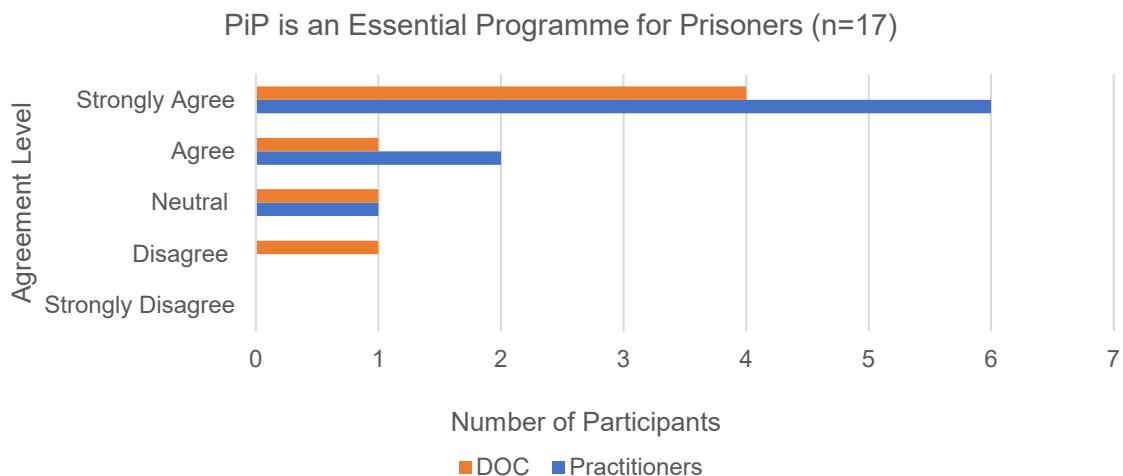


Figure 7 – Survey participants' level of agreement regarding PiPs role in suite of programmes available to prisoners

The PiP programme fits well within existing New Zealand/national strategies, frameworks and initiatives that recognise the importance of supporting incarcerated parents and their families. The Hōkai Rangi 2019-2024 strategy expressed the commitment of Department of Corrections to delivering great outcomes with and for Māori and their whānau. The strategy

integrated principles like oranga (wellbeing) to ensure that programmes not only supported rehabilitation but also fostered familial connections and parenting skills. In addition, Wāhine:

E Rere Ana Ki te Pae Hou Women's Strategy 2021-2025 sets out Ara Poutama Aotearoa's plan to build, strengthen and empower the oranga of women under their management. Programmes under this strategy are designed to address these complex needs, aiming to break the cycle of re-offending by addressing root causes and supporting women in their roles as mothers and parents. In addition, the programme aligns well with internal PSN and FWN strategies that prioritise amplifying the voices of vulnerable persons and addressing their needs.

The evaluation found stakeholders believed that PiP aligns well with broader rehabilitation and social service goals, complementing other parenting initiatives in the justice system. Participants and DoC staff reported PiP fills an important niche in the suite of programmes for prisoners who are parents. One Corrections staff member highlighted the significance of cross-programme sequencing when PiP is delivered alongside Storytime (reading to children) and Brainwave Trust programmes (child development education) stating:

*[...] When delivered as the initial programme in a "suite" of parenting interventions including the Storytime Foundation and Brainwave Trust, the shift in mindset and motivation of remand men is significant. This block of learning supports the reintegration of men back to the community and whānau environment, often when other interventions are unavailable prior to release."*

The programme is meant to be delivered as part of a suite of parenting programmes, however, this does not happen often as the constant moving of prisoners (remand sites) makes it challenging to deliver the full suite concurrently to the same groups. Interestingly, when this does occur, some participants experience perceived content overlap and struggled to differentiate courses when recalling them during the interviews. Overall, parents view PiP as important aspect of their rehabilitation journey and/or court requirements. For example, one parent explained they proactively sought out parenting courses before even getting a family lawyer, to strengthen their case for regaining custody of their children.

The PiP programme incorporates family violence content and contributes to broader family violence prevention strategies and initiatives. Providing gender-specific content on family violence would strengthen its alignment with national best-practice frameworks and ensure it addresses the underlying gendered drivers of violence. This approach would make the material both more relevant and safer for participants, support targeted safety strategies, and avoid the risk of neutral framing that can obscure patterns of power, control, and inequality. The evaluation found participants did learn and recall some insights they gleaned during the programme regarding family violence prevention, particularly around managing anger and frustration to keep children safe.

*"It's important to walk away when feeling frustrated and the baby is crying." [Parent]*

Participants reflected on topics like conflict management, power and control, and how family violence impacts children. This prompted group discussions on healthy versus unhealthy family dynamics and the support children need. The interviews revealed that some segments

of the programme e.g. Shaken Baby Syndrome were particularly distressing for some participants.

*“You know what? That just triggers me [family violence], and I don’t think I’ve really listened around that bit, because I don’t recall even hearing anything about it.” [Parent]*

In some cases, facilitators skipped segments of the programme, in particular Shaken Baby Syndrome, recognising that direct or indirect experiences of violence made it difficult for some incarcerated parents to engage with this content in a group setting. This highlighted the importance of approaching such topics using a trauma-informed approach. Interestingly, some men responded negatively to family violence discussions finding it alienating and typecasting them as bad parents. This suggests family violence content may benefit from taking a more gendered approach that acknowledges men and women’s experiences, challenges stereotypes, and fosters constructive engagement.

Overall, PiP does make some contribution to family violence prevention by raising awareness and offering some parenting techniques that may support participants. It actively works with men? in the Family Harm unit at Mt Eden Corrections Facility and aims to motivate and encourage behaviour change amongst perpetrators of family violence which is a key focal point of New Zealand’s long-term family violence strategy - Te Aorerekura.

### **Programme delivery is equitable, relevant and efficient**

<b>VfM criteria</b>	<b>Sub-criteria</b>	<b>Evaluative judgment</b>	<b>Rationale for evaluative judgement</b>
Adaptable and equitable programme delivery	Tailoring delivery to parents' needs and goals	Good	FWN facilitators express willingness to tailor and adapt the PiP programme where possible to support parents' needs and goals, although limited by structural constraints and inflexible content design.
	Evolving and improving service delivery to overcome barriers to parent engagement/participation	Insufficient – Adequate	DoC selection process appears ad hoc, lacking transparency and consistency across sites limiting equitable access to the PiP programme. FWN selection process appears to be applied consistently except in a few instances.
	Safe and supportive space conducive for learning	Excellent	Parents report PiP offers a supportive and comfortable group environment that fosters honest reflection and learning.

Table 12 – Adaptable and equitable programme delivery evaluative judgement

Where possible, FWN facilitators sought to adapt and tailor programme delivery to meet participants' needs and personal goals, although they were ultimately constrained by

structural barriers and the prescribed nature of the course content. The survey found six facilitators agreed the programme was adaptable, while three respondents felt neutral to this statement (see Figure 5). In addition, facilitators reported adjusting their approach or content depending on learning styles and group dynamics.

*“Flexibility to adapt the programme to the participants who present.” [FWN Facilitator]*

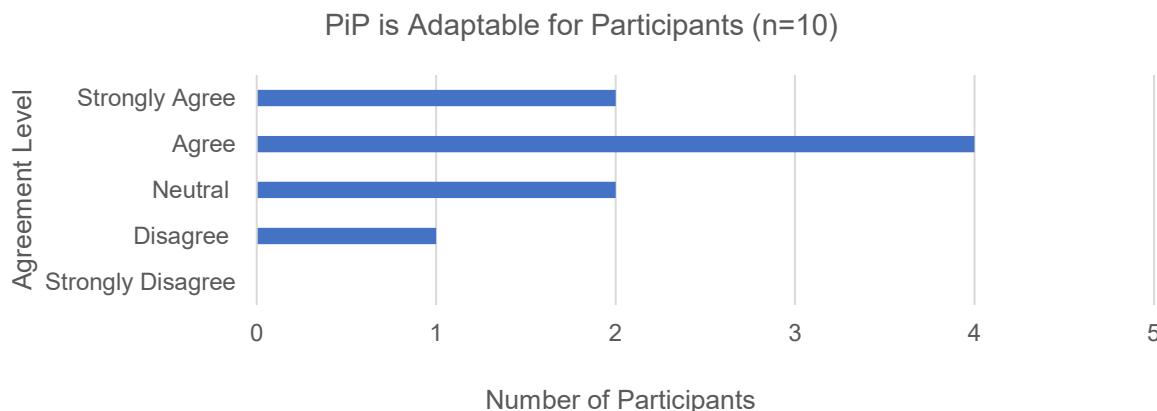


Figure 8 – FWN practitioners’ level of agreement regarding PiP as an adaptable programme

In practice, this required a mix of teaching methods - e.g. additional reading/writing help for those with low literacy, or additional explanation of concepts that were new. Given the limited time available, facilitators were often proactive in offering targeted assistance to ensure all participants could keep pace. One parent observed their facilitators would walk around and provide additional one-on-one support to those struggling with the worksheets. The co-gendered facilitation was highlighted by both facilitators and participants as an important dynamic that helped them adapt to various learning styles and preferences.

*“Flexible delivery based on learning styles etc and relational approach to the programme builds safety. Co-gendered facilitation is essential and positive as it provides modelling to the participants of respectful communication and shared decision making which is a key learning from the course content.” [Facilitator]*

The interviews revealed that some facilitators had a greater ability to engage with parents and deliver the PiP programme. In some cases, this was attributed to their confidence and shared lived experiences that resonated with participants making it easier to relate with.

*“On the topic of staff skills, I believe that all participants get a good set of skills and knowledge from the programme no matter who delivers this. Some facilitators will be more confident in delivering in a prison setting than others.” [FWN Practitioner]*

*“So, I related to [facilitator]. Before if they didn’t have a life experience you wouldn’t really. You sort of think whatever mate you know, but [facilitator]*

*has been through the ringer. And [...] coming out on top and [...] got good advice.” [Parent]*

Although many participants felt the course content aligned with their parenting needs and goals, PiP participants represent a diverse group with varying personal circumstances, which can make it challenging to meet everyone's needs and goals through a single programme. For example, one new grandfather appreciated the inclusion of strategies for parenting teenagers, as he was working to become a better parent to his adult children and his new grandchild. Although, another participant who had teenage children felt the course should focus more in depth on parenting teenagers and current real-world issues e.g., vaping and social media, rather than covering content related to newborns. Overall, most participants could draw direct lines from the programme to their personal parenting needs and goals. The main constraints to full tailoring were time constraints and curricular inflexibility rather than facilitator willingness or capability.

While there is some stakeholder awareness of the need to reduce barriers to participation, evaluation findings suggest this awareness remains limited and inconsistently addressed. The existing FWN selection criteria includes: not being a parent of a child aged 0–18, any sexual offending against children, and being unmotivated to attend. These are generally applied consistently, although exceptions do occur - for example, individuals without children have at times participated. Conversations with parents and indirect discussions with prison staff indicate that Corrections uses an ad hoc, inconsistent selection process, with limited transparency on how participants are chosen. This is often attributed to a lack of case managers, reduced on-site staffing levels and the remand nature of the prison, which make it difficult to fully implement the intended selection process. Such inconsistencies may affect equitable access to the programme. It is important to note that these issues are not the responsibility of FWN practitioners but rather reflect broader systemic challenges within the Corrections environment.

Although this selection criteria seems to be applied most of the time it is not applied uniformly across sites, with some participants enrolled despite not having children, and others included even though they were due for deportation and unlikely to benefit from long-term parenting support. Additionally, some participants do not have an assigned case manager, and the selection process can appear ad hoc or inconsistent, with limited transparency around how participants are selected. These inconsistencies highlight gaps in implementation that limit equitable access to the programme. Again, these issues are not the responsibility of FWN practitioners but reflect broader systemic challenges within the Corrections environment.

PiP is delivered in a safe, supportive environment that supports honest reflection and learning amongst participants. Many parents described feeling welcomed and respected in the group.

*“Yes, it was welcoming...inclusive...made you vulnerable straight away.” [Parent]*

*“They were nice, cool, helpful, funny...made the space comfortable and non-judgmental.” [Parent]*

The facilitators set a tone of trust and openness asking participants to write their children's name on a whiteboard as a way of bringing them into the room. Ground rules such as

confidentiality were emphasised, providing reassurance for the participants, helping typically guarded individuals feel comfortable opening up, and allowing camaraderie to develop within the group. Disclosure and vulnerability are difficult to achieve in prison settings, yet PiP often managed to create a space where individuals could share personal and family experiences and stories.

*“I was one of the first ones to do the course [PiP] in LIMA. I did it five months ago and it’s still fresh in my mind. I’ve still got somewhere glitter from the letters that we made our kids to send it’s still flowing around my room. Yeah, we made handmade cards to say we love them. But it was lovely. I cried making mine. Because I was sending it to [daughter] and I didn’t know where to send it. So, they said make and put it away.”*

The programme observation confirmed that by the end, many groups felt a strong bond, cheering and supporting each other at graduation ceremonies. They expressed visible pride and joy in completing the course, with graduation rituals (cape, hat, certificate) treated with respect and enthusiasm. One participant even performed a rap they wrote that explored the key messages from the course.

While pre-existing tensions and existing prison hierarchies among inmates could affect participation and engagement, overall, PiP manages to carve out a safe and supportive learning space. Participants and staff repeatedly emphasised the rarity and value of having a space where incarcerated parents feel safe to be open and honest about their parenting – something not typically found elsewhere in the prison.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Culturally responsive approaches	Culturally respectful programme	Excellent	The PiP programme is highly respectful of the varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds, learning needs, family and whānau needs of parents. Parents praised the facilitators for their considered, kind and compassionate approach.
	Valuing and inclusion of Te ao Māori, Tikanga Māori and Mātauranga Māori	Adequate	PiP incorporates some Te ao Māori values and content that resonates with parents, although parents and FWN facilitators suggest further work is required to strengthen this area. This is particularly important in light of Māori overrepresentation in the prison system.

Table 13 – Culturally responsive approaches evaluative judgement

The evaluation found PiP was respectful and considerate of the diverse nature of participants' cultural, ethnic, and whānau backgrounds, while also finding scope for enhancing the cultural responsiveness of programme, particularly around Te ao Māori, Tikanga Māori and Mātauranga Māori. Where present these elements often resonated deeply with some

participants, for example Whare Tapa Whā conceptualisation of wellbeing. The evaluation found that while elements were incorporated into the PiP programme, their inclusion was not consistent or fully developed and likely relied heavily on individual facilitators' knowledge and comfort. Less than half of the facilitators agreed the programme was culturally responsive suggesting further work is required in these areas.

*“Cultural aspect to be more thoroughly inclusive for Māori and Pasifika.*

*More expansion of Te Whare Tapa Whā or other health models relevant to them. [...]. Restoring mana when it's been taken and how to reclaim it back through their connection with their children.”*

*“Include cultural components.”*

*“More of a cultural lens.”*

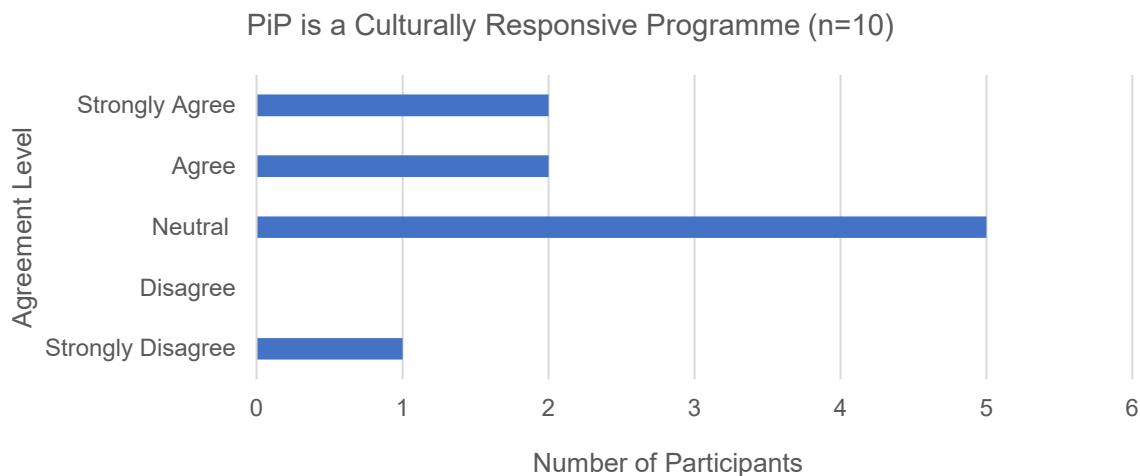


Figure 9 – FWN practitioners' level of agreement regarding PiP as a culturally responsive programme

Parents also noted opportunities to further integrate Te ao Māori – for example, ensuring Māori values and tikanga were not just mentioned but actively practised.

*“In te reo Māori, yeah, you can feel the words coming out of the mouth. They're not just words like the pakeha words. [...] This being where all the Māori are, this is where a lot of Māori are in this prison. [...] I've heard a lot of wāhine in here speak te reo Māori and come across a lot of them that don't know Pakeha (English), and they're too shy to go into Pakeha things, [...] I understand where they're coming from. Because learning a pakeha thing here things makes you feel dumb. Doesn't make you feel smart at all.”*  
*[Parent]*

Overall, PiP is attuned and respectful of participants culture, ethnicity, whānau backgrounds. It fosters important Te ao Māori values like whānaungatanga and seeks to weave them into the programme, however, this is not yet a consistently strong feature of the service design.

Both participant feedback and practitioner input suggest a need for more intentional and comprehensive inclusion of Te ao Māori world views and perspectives.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Relevant and effective content	Participants are satisfied with the programme	Excellent	Parents express overwhelming satisfaction with PiP programme across sites aligning with FWN practitioner's feedback.
	Participants feel empowered to make positive changes	Good	PiP provided hope and supported a significant positive shift in self-belief for many parents. Most parents feel empowered to make changes in their lives.
	Use of evidence-informed content that instil practical, effective parenting knowledge, skills and strategies	Good	PiP draws on some evidence-based developmental science, relationship and parenting. Most parents report it is useful for them but for some it lacks insights on current modern-day parenting challenges e.g. social media and vaping.

Table 14 – Relevant and effective content evaluative judgement

Participant satisfaction with PiP is consistently high. Across various prison sites, the programme was positively received, with many participants describing it as “good,” “helpful,” or “great,” and recommending it to other parents. Data collected through evaluation at closure (EAC) shows participants are satisfied with the content delivered. FWN facilitators observed that participants appeared satisfied with the course, with 10 respondents either ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ in feedback surveys (see Figure 10). One Corrections staff member noted feedback at graduation ceremonies as overwhelmingly positive.

*“Feedback is always very positive when i have attended the “graduation” of the programme.” [DoC Staff]*

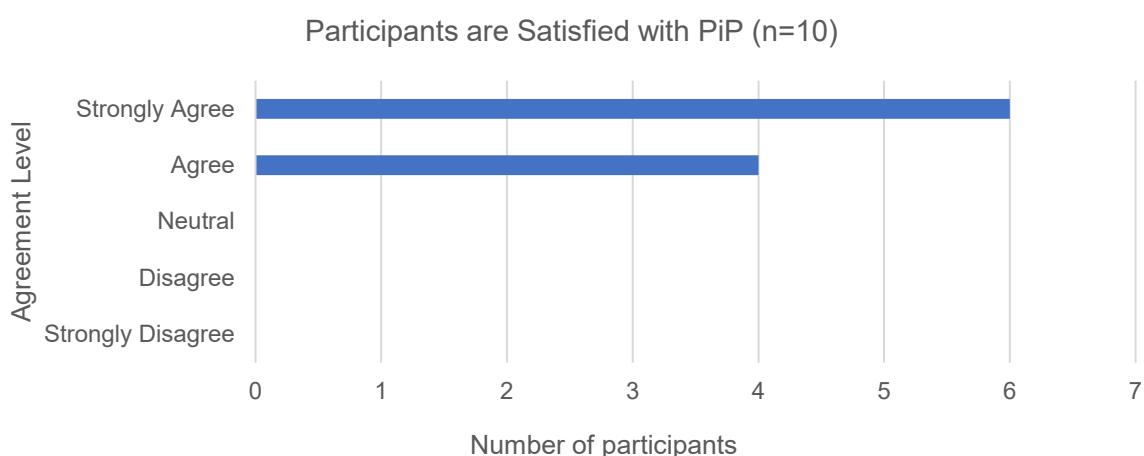


Figure 10 – FWN practitioners level of agreement that participants are satisfied with the programme

During the observed graduation, the pride and joy on participants' faces was clear as they donned caps and received certificates. This celebratory atmosphere, with laughter and cheering, reflects genuine satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment among the group. Overall, virtually every participant who engaged in PiP found it worthwhile and satisfying despite the prison environment's challenges. The combination of useful content, supportive facilitation, and the rare chance to focus on parenthood in prison contributed to high satisfaction.

PiP consistently helped parents feel more empowered and motivated to improve their parenting and life choices. Many participants left the programme with a boost in confidence and a proactive mindset due to with new parenting approaches they were equipped with.

*"More confident now...probably [because of] the course and facilitator." [Parent]*

*"I feel more confident...got a different approach on everything," [Parent]*

*"[I] believe that I could still be a mum again." [Parent]*

Participants noted the PiP programme provided hope and supported a significant positive shift in self-belief. They frequently described a sense of determination to apply what they had learned and implement these new strategies with their children. Others linked the course to a larger motivation to change their lifestyle and avoid reoffending. Not all participants experienced a dramatic newfound empowerment – a few felt they already had confidence in parenting and thus described the course as reinforcing and validating, rather than revolutionising their mindset. Nearly all facilitators agreed that the participants appear to be more motivated to be better parents by the end of the programme (see Figure 11). Overall, PiP empowers its participants by enhancing their confidence, motivation and giving them practical parenting tools.

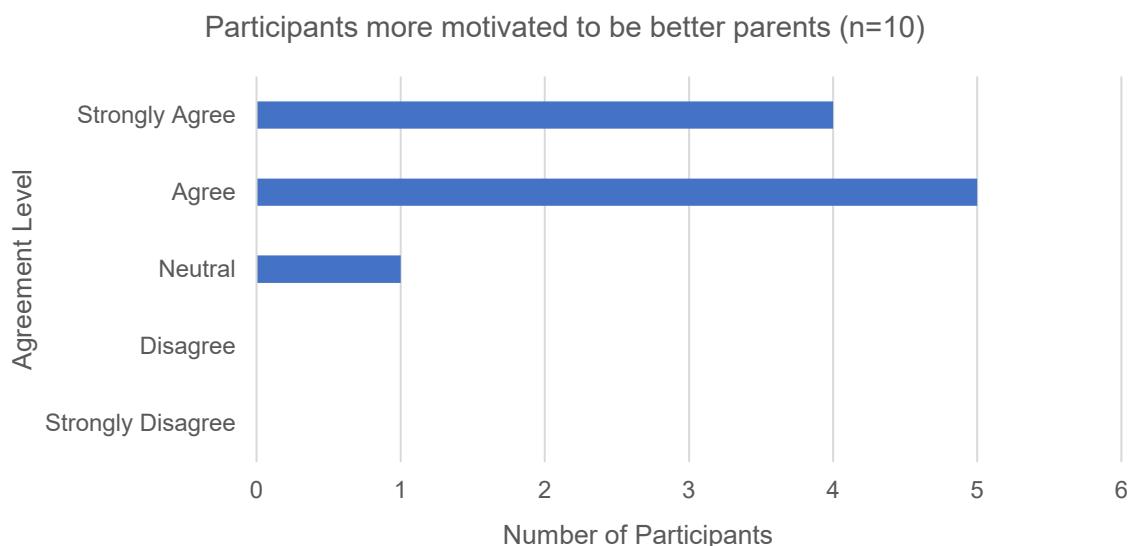


Figure 11 – FWN practitioners' level of agreement that participants feel more motivated to be better parents

The PiP curriculum draws on evidence-based parenting topics and principles, with many participants gaining practical skills and knowledge from it. The programme covered brain development and trauma. This included early childhood development, neural pathways, and infant safety which covered important topics such as Shaken Baby Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Participants recalled how trauma and adverse experiences can affect a child's behaviour and emotional needs, and conversely, how play and positive engagement support healthy development. Multiple participants recalled 'Love Languages' for children – a framework from psychology – which they found enlightening in understanding how to show affection. Participants learnt the value of words of affirmation and the importance of using more positive language to show love to children, family and co-parents.

*"One of the biggest learning that the participants enjoy is the 5 Languages of Love. It can be confronting for them at first because they realise, they don't know their children on that level." [Parent]*

The evaluation did find the detailed course material is often covered too quickly – with the short format hindering long-term retention. Additionally, facilitators pointed out some pedagogical issues arising from the manual: e.g., heavy and dense text, missing content, and some disjointed sections that could confuse participants if not taught well.

*"I would add in a section or some more in-depth coverage of emotions and emotional regulation [...]. If they are not able to understand emotions in themselves, how do they support their children to have good emotional regulation?" [FWN Facilitator]*

*"Some of the structure/content of the sessions, there are some things in the format of the manual that simply don't make sense or go together/ flow well, I know the programme well enough to move around what I don't like to make it flow and work better, but for someone new learning the programme it doesn't always flow well [...]." [FWN Facilitator]*

*"Some of the way that the manual is formatted is not fit for purpose. For example, in the teenager section there is information about ignoring. When delivering the programme, it makes it hard and confusing for the participants to understand why the sections are made like that." [FWN Facilitator]*

## Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities and society

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluation judgement
<b>Parents experience improved outcomes</b>	Participants develop better parenting knowledge and skills	Good	The majority of parents feel they finish the PiP programme with stronger parenting competencies. All FWN facilitators strongly agreed participants experience gains in knowledge and skills. DoC participants rated the PiP course 6.71 out of 10 for effectiveness; this result, alongside the other evidence, contributed to the programme being judged as 'good' rather than 'excellent' evaluative judgement.
	Participants are more confident as parents, developing greater self-esteem	Excellent	The overwhelming majority of participants report a meaningful impact in their parental confidence, boosting self-esteem and giving them a sense of efficacy and hope. The majority of FWN facilitators broadly agreed with the improvements across these areas.
	Parents experience strengthened whanaungatanga through more positive engagement, communication and connection with their children, family and whānau.	Adequate	Parents are taking steps towards more positive engagement with their children and whānau, though full realisation of improved relationships is often limited by physical separation and limited contact. Therefore, limiting the ability of the programme to deliver stronger outcomes in this area.
	Parents are motivated to participate in further learning	Good	None of the parents interviewed indicated an unwillingness to pursue further learning opportunities. In some cases, the PiP course ignited a spark for further learning and self-betterment.

Table 15 – Parents experience improved outcomes evaluative judgement

The PiP programme is viewed by key stakeholders as an effective programme, indicating that it delivers meaningful social value. Practitioners and Corrections staff were asked to rate the effectiveness of the PiP programme on a scale from 1-10 (see Figure 12). Practitioner ratings were concentrated at the higher end of the scale, particularly around ratings of 8 and 10, while DoC staff ratings were more evenly distributed, with a modest peak at 7 and 8. Neither group selected ratings in the lower range of 1-2 or the mid-range of 5-6. The average rating given by Practitioners was 8.30, compared with 6.71 by DoC Staff, indicating that practitioners rated the programme more favourably overall. While these averages provide a

useful summary, the small sample size and ordinal nature of the data mean they should be interpreted with caution and considered alongside the rest of the evaluation data.

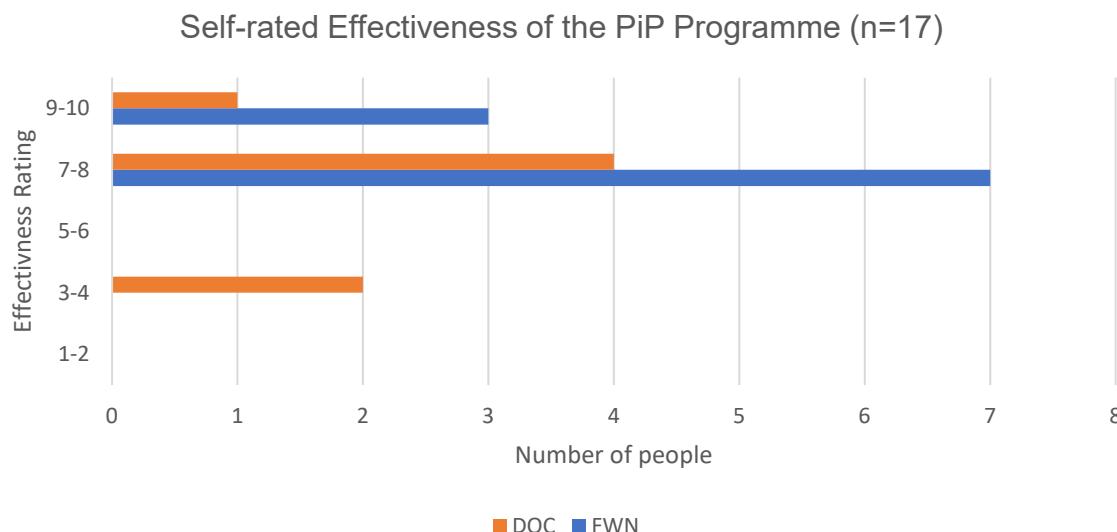


Figure 12 – Key stakeholders' level of agreement that PiP is an effective programme

PiP is effective in building parenting knowledge and skills, as evidenced by participants' newly acquired understanding and reports of changed parenting behaviours. By the end of the programme, parents could often articulate specific new things they learned about parenting. Participants reported gaining skills in positive engagement, showing growth in managing expectations and patience with children. In terms of knowledge, some were exposed for the first time to child developmental stages and needs. The course allowed some participants to look introspectively at their own lives and childhoods, deepening their understanding of how past experiences shape parenting, and helping them develop more informed and intentional approaches to raising their own children:

*“I learned a bit about myself through it as well. Okay, you know, especially well, but there was from young adolescents, you know, through because there was a big period in my own life that I didn't have role models. [...] So that helped understand, that helped give me the knowledge is, oh, that's why I was like this. Well, that's why I was so I could do a lot of self-identity with that, which I think will help me moving forwards.” [Parent]*

Some participants struggled to list specific skills offhand, however, they acknowledged they picked up some tools and knowledge - indicating incremental improvement, if not a dramatic shift. Facilitator survey data confirms these findings with all 100% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing participants finished the course with increased parenting knowledge, skills and strategies. Overall, the trend is clear, most participants leave PiP with enhanced parenting competencies than which they entered. Whether it's better understanding their child's needs, learning new parenting techniques, or simply having a broader toolkit to draw from, their capacity as parents has improved.

One of the most immediate outcomes of PiP is an increase in parents' confidence and self-belief in their parenting role. Many participants reported that the programme affirmed their ability to be a good parent and, in some cases, restored confidence that had been eroded by difficult circumstances. It represented a shift from self-doubt to confidence. Others who already had some confidence said PiP bolstered it further by adding knowledge and validating their strengths. The boost in confidence often went hand-in-hand with increased self-esteem.

*“Yes [increased self-esteem], I feel like I did something for my daughter.”  
[Parent]*

There were a few who did not report a big change in confidence – typically because they already felt confident. Importantly, no participant reported a drop in confidence while most saw a clear positive trajectory in their levels of confidence. In facilitator assessments, most agreed that participants leave with greater confidence in their parenting abilities and with greater personal self-esteem – although four respondents felt neutral (see Figure 13). Overall, PiP had a meaningful impact on parental confidence, boosting self-esteem and giving mothers and fathers a sense of efficacy and hope in their parenting.

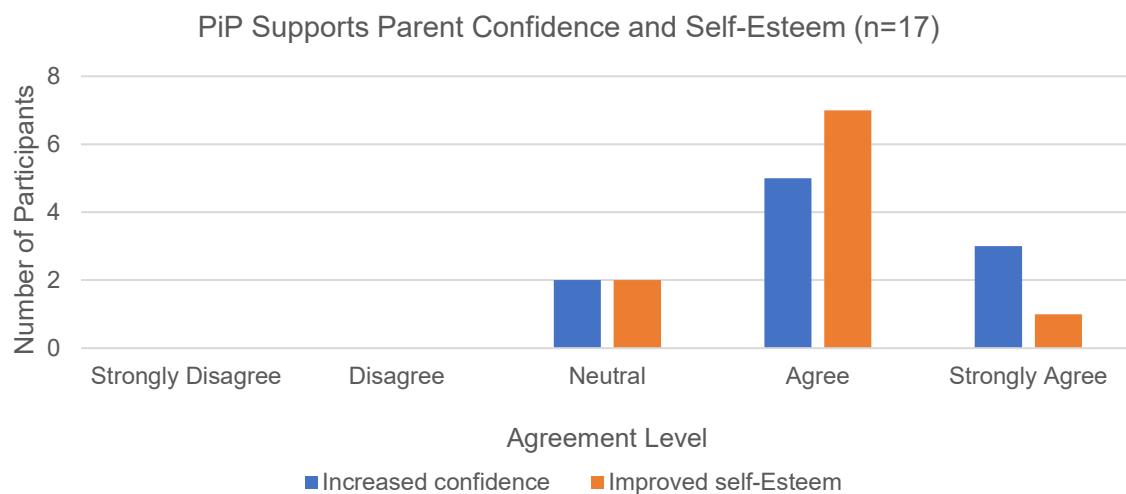


Figure 13 – FWN facilitators level of agreement that PiP supports parenting confidence and self-esteem

Strengthening whanaungatanga - the sense of connection and bonding with family - is one of PiP's primary aims. During the programme, parents began taking steps towards more positive engagement with their children and whānau, though full realisation of improved relationships is often limited by the prison setting. Many participants reported that PiP made them more mindful of how they interact with family. For example, participants mentioned being more attentive and communicative in phone calls or visits with their children as a result of attending/completing/doing the course. This is an early sign of improved parent-child communication even while incarcerated.

*“Facilitator she was amazing. Now she gave me tools, not only the tools they teach you in the class, but how to communicate with [child], how to communicate with my daughter - my youngest daughter. She's just on the phone. Just keep the conversation going. Sing to her. And it's all worked.”*  
*[Parent]*

Many participants could not yet demonstrate significantly ‘strengthened’ family relationships for the simple reason that imprisonment imposes physical separation and limited phone and visitation contact. In 2025, Corrections limited the length of calls allowed each day from three hours to 30 minutes. Many participants noted the significant impact this had on their ability to develop connection with their families and children. Communication with children (particularly teenagers) was very difficult as they're often not around and when they are available to chat the allotted phone time has to be split with other children. In addition, many participants have existing Restraining or Protection orders that prevent contact with their children, family and co-parent.

Overall, the PiP programme plants the seeds for strengthened whanaungatanga by equipping parents with better communication skills and a greater willingness to improve and connect positively. Most facilitators felt participants had a greater sense of connection and a more comprehensive kete of skills that could be applied. Although structural constraints prevent contact, many participants noted feeling closer and more connected to their kids. The card-making activity had a significant impact for many of them. In some cases, participants make some improvements (more open conversations, sharing learning with partners, etc.), although for most the actual degree of physical connection and communication during incarceration does not substantially change.

Participation in PiP often sparked an appetite for further self-improvement and learning, reflecting the programme’s ability to inspire ongoing growth. By the end of the course, parents consistently expressed interest in taking additional programmes or pursuing education, whereas prior to doing the programme, they may not have considered it. Several participants explicitly said that PiP opened them up to continuing education and pursuing further courses. One parent shared their plans to study to be a social worker once out - noting engaging in courses such as PiP boosted their confidence and self-belief in further learning.

*“It's pretty positive, like going for a course in general, and then completing it. You know, it's like, [...], I felt like I've actually done something.”* [Parent]

Facilitators noticed this trend as well with eight agreeing that participants became more motivated to pursue other educational opportunities after PiP. They cited examples of participants asking about what programmes they could do next or expressing enthusiasm for educational content. A facilitator noted that men who had never thought about counselling or therapy were for the first time considering it:

*“Men have approached us asking for counselling support on the other side, something they never would have entertained...before meeting us and realising it's not a bad thing.”* [FWN Facilitator]

It is important to note that not every single participant voiced such motivations, however, no participant indicated an unwillingness to pursue further learning. Overall, PiP ignites a spark for further learning and self-betterment. Participants leave not only with their learnings, but inspired to keep improving – whether via additional programmes (parenting, vocational, or educational) or by engaging with supportive services.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Support networks and inclusion in the community	Participants build connections with other parents	Excellent	The shared lived experience and challenges faced formed strong connections between many parents. Facilitators also affirmed this occurred during PiP programmes. Programme observation noted strong support and comraderie amongst parents.
	Parents feel supported and develop awareness of accessible parenting services in the community	Adequate	PiP plays an initial role in connecting parents to support systems, but this remains a weaker aspect of the programme. During the interviews, many parents demonstrated limited awareness of external parenting resources while some reported feeling little tangible support beyond the programme itself.

Table 16 – Support networks and inclusion in the community evaluative judgement

A notable benefit of PiP is the peer support and camaraderie that develops among participating parents, that in many cases leads to meaningful connections within the prison community. During the programme, parents bonded over their shared experience of parenting from prison, interacting on a deeper personal level. Participants frequently mentioned that hearing others' stories and struggles made them feel less alone. One parent was relieved when they heard others share mistakes and growth. This normalisation of their challenges helped them support each other. The graduation event further solidified these bonds, with participants cheering for each other's success, indicating genuine camaraderie. Facilitator feedback supports this outcome with most facilitators (7 out of 10) agreeing that participants form meaningful connections with each other during PiP. In some instances, if a participant was transferred or left mid-course (in remand environments), sustaining these personal connections was harder. Nonetheless, many of those who went through the full programme together experienced stronger and more positive connections with other parents.

PiP begins to connect parents with support systems, but this is an area of weakness in the current programme. Awareness of external parenting resources remains low for many participants, and some do not yet feel tangibly supported beyond the programme itself. Inside the class, participants do feel supported by the facilitators and each other, which is important groundwork. However, when it comes to knowledge of resources in the community or post-release support, the feedback is mixed and more negative. Participants were unclear on what support was available to them as parents once they left prison. In many cases there was a

gap between desire for help and knowledge of where to get it. These sentiments were common, especially among those who were not connected with social services before incarceration. One participant indicated they would just google for support for dads – not a very confident or guided strategy. This lack of awareness may leave motivated parents without clear next steps. Interestingly, this qualitative feedback contrasts with FWN's post-evaluation survey data from FY25 Q2–Q3, where all participants reported knowing where to find parenting help. This discrepancy may reflect memory decay over time or differences in how participants interpreted the question. Providing a tangible reference - such as a handout or flyer listing relevant services - could help bridge the gap between feeling supported in class and navigating support independently after release.

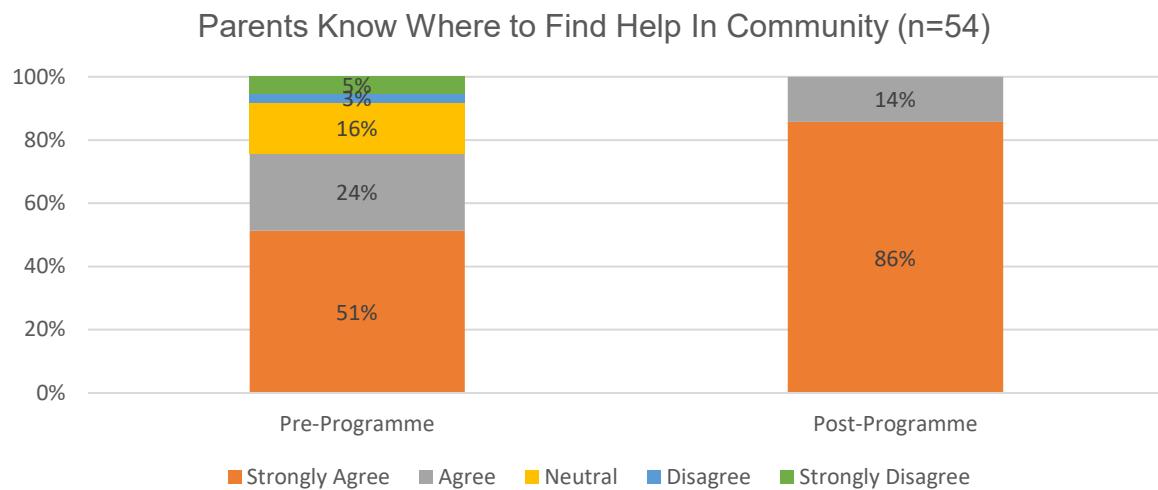


Figure 14 – EAC data showing parents' agreement levels on knowing where to find community support before and after participating in the PiP programme.

During the programme observation, facilitators informed participants about Family Works and other community agencies that could assist them as parents after release. This indicates that the programme provided clear and practical signposting to community services. However, some participants expressed cynicism and identified perceived barriers to accessing support in the community speaking of *“long wait times and discrimination due to criminal record.”* This cynicism means that even if awareness exists, the feeling of being truly supported is lacking, although this is no fault of the PiP programme itself. The current model essentially ends at graduation, with the onus on the individual to seek help – something they may not know how to do. Overall, while PiP excels at providing support during the programme and tries to link participants to broader parenting support networks outside, it is unclear how effective this really is.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Children and families experience improved outcomes	Families' wellbeing is enhanced through improved communication, positive contact, and	Insufficient evidence	Some parents reported modest improvements and some optimism for family wellbeing. However, structural and legal

	application of parenting knowledge and skills		constraints prevented most participants from applying learnings, therefore making an evaluative judgement difficult.
	Children experience greater stability, emotional security and positive role modelling, reducing their own risk of negative life outcomes	Insufficient evidence	Some parents experienced modest improvements in family wellbeing. However, structural and legal constraints prevented most participants from applying learnings therefore making an evaluative judgement difficult.

Table 17 – Children and families experience improved outcomes evaluative judgement

Given the constraints of incarceration, PiP's impact on family wellbeing is largely indirect and prospective, rather than immediately observable. While participants acquire new communication techniques and parenting skills (as detailed earlier), their current ability to apply these with family members is often limited. Thus, during the evaluation period there were few concrete enhancements to family wellbeing reported, though future improvements are anticipated. Many participants had minimal contact with their children and noted that the overall situation for their families hadn't significantly changed yet. Children were often still living with caregivers who struggled, and the parent-child relationship remained strained or on hold. For example, one parent acknowledged that being in prison "puts strain" on the relationship with their children, and nothing could fully remove that strain except being there for them in person. For mothers, being separated from their tamariki meant family wellbeing could not truly improve until reunification – one mother noted there was no improvement in her family's welfare because she was still behind bars and geographically distant from her children.

However, there were early positive signs in the realm of communication. Participants who applied PiP lessons in their limited interactions often saw small wins. This included having better phone conversations, being emotionally attuned and available, and applying their conflict resolution skills.

*The men sometimes have shared they use some of the knowledges they learn about the brain (such as why a baby enjoys peek-a-boo) and try it with their children with visitation visits.” [FWN Facilitator]*

While these are modest gains, they indicate that PiP has begun to improve family dynamics on a small scale (e.g., less arguing, more affection expressed). The true enhancement of family wellbeing – such as improved child behaviour or emotional security, and stronger parent-child bonds – is expected to manifest after release, when parents have the opportunity to apply their skills consistently. Parents, facilitators, and staff all expressed optimism about this. Participants spoke of plans to maintain positive contact (writing letters, arranging quality time upon release) that should improve family wellbeing in the long run. For now, these remain plans. Overall, PiP in most cases has not yet measurably enhanced the

wellbeing of most participants' families during incarceration, aside from modest improvements in some areas. The potential for significant positive impact on family wellbeing exists and is likely to be realised post-release when parents can fully implement what they have learned.

Under current circumstances, it is unclear if the children of PiP participants have yet experienced discernible increases in stability or emotional security due to their parent's participation. However, PiP graduates have committed to changes that could benefit their children in the future by providing better role modelling and more secure relationships once reunified. At the time of evaluation, many children were still experiencing the hardships associated with having a parent in prison. One parent acknowledged their absence was negatively affecting their son's emotional security, underlining the current distress and instability children face.

*"[My] son says, 'Mummy come back, I miss you,'" [Parent]*

Likewise, fathers noted that as long as they were incarcerated, they could not be the steady presence their children needed, recognising that their children's sense of stability and bonding was on hold while they were inside. Therefore, it is unlikely children have already gained greater emotional security or stability from their parent attending PiP – where the lack of contact and physical absence overrides any incremental improvements for now. Overall, due to the ongoing incarceration of parents, children have not yet realised significant gains in stability or emotional security from PiP. The programme's effect is currently seen in the parents' increased commitment to providing these benefits in the future. If parents follow through on their plans, their children stand to gain a more secure, nurturing environment in the future, which should reduce the children's risks of negative outcomes.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Effective use of resource for rehabilitation and reintegration	Parents view programme as important to their rehabilitation and reintegration	Good	Parents view PiP content as important to their rehabilitation and reintegration. Most FWN practitioners and DoC staff view PiP favourably in terms of post-release.
	Parents express confidence in future rehabilitation and reintegration	Adequate	Some parents feel more confident that they can turn their lives around and reintegrate successfully. Although many remain circumspect about the challenges they confront as parents post-release, particularly around lack of employment opportunities, strong support networks and recurrent alcohol and drug problems.

Table 18 – Effective use of resource use for rehabilitation and reintegration evaluative judgement

Many participants regard PiP as a valuable component of their rehabilitation journey and an aid to their eventual reintegration into the community. From their perspective, the programme is not just a “parenting class” in isolation, but a crucial tool for personal change and successful return to society as responsible parents. Several participants explicitly linked PiP to their rehabilitation. One parent credited the programme with fundamentally altering his post-release outlook, stating:

*“Without the course...my kids wouldn’t be in my life or even want to be in my life. I think I wouldn’t see them at all.” [Parent]*

This powerful statement reflects their belief that PiP equipped them with tools to rebuild relationships - an important motivator for reintegration into the community. The programme addressed a critical skills gap, supporting its rehabilitation goal of becoming a present parent and positive role model. Survey results indicate most practitioners and Corrections staff view PiP positively in terms of supporting rehabilitation and reintegration with just one practitioner disagreeing. Overall, PiP is seen as an important component of rehabilitation. It provides participants with practical tools and motivation that can be a turning point in their mindset, strengthening their resolve to avoid future incarceration and supporting their successful reintegration with whānau and community.

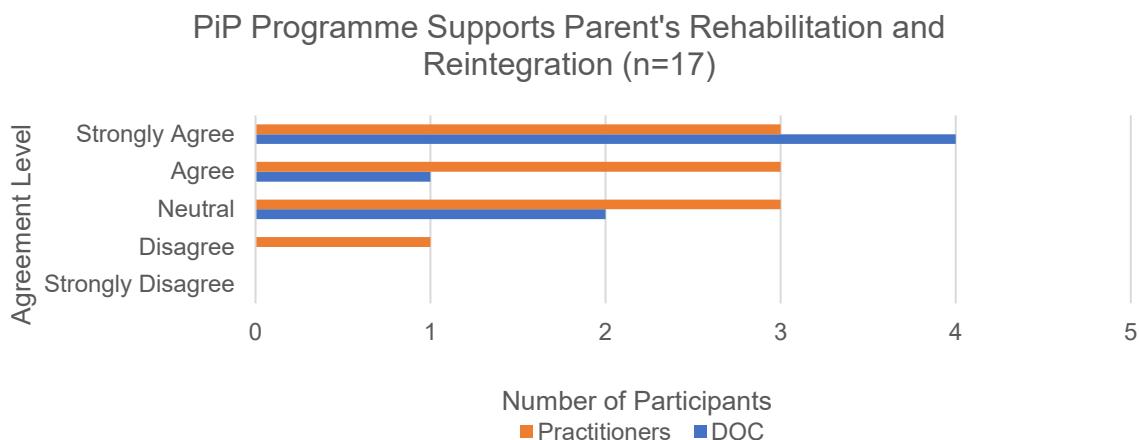


Figure 15 – Agreement levels of FWN facilitators and DoC staff on PiP’s support for parent rehabilitation and reintegration

After completing PiP, many parents felt more confident that they can turn their lives around and reintegrate successfully, though some retain a degree of caution and self-awareness about the challenges ahead. The programme instilled hope and concrete goals for life after release, but participants’ confidence levels varied based on their personal histories and existing support systems. On the optimistic end, some participants voiced strong confidence in their ability to stay on track and rebuild their lives post-release. However, not everyone was uniformly confident or optimistic; some expressed lingering doubts or acknowledged ongoing uncertainties. One participant tempered their optimism with realism, noting they were their biggest challenge with their triggers and traumas and recognising that their success as a parent depends on overcoming personal issues/challenges. Scepticism also

stemmed from past failures, with participants identifying key barriers such as gang involvement, substance use, restricted access to children and family, limited support networks, and a lack of employment opportunities. This indicates that while PiP graduates leave with a positive outlook, the transition to the community is a vulnerable time where confidence could falter without continued support.

VfM criteria	Sub-criteria	Evaluative judgment	Rationale for evaluative judgement
Contribution to long-term social outcomes	Participants express commitment to staying connected to children/family and engaged with community support and networks	Excellent	Parents finish the PiP programme with clear practical strategies and plans for how they will re-engage with their children, co-parents or partners. The overwhelming majority of parents showed strong commitment to building relationships with their families.
	Parents recognise intergenerational impacts of incarceration on children/family	Excellent	The majority of parents clearly recognised the intergenerational impact of incarceration and were strongly motivated to break cycles of harm for the benefit of their children and whānau. The PiP programme reinforced both an urgency and hope that change is possible.

Table 19 – Long-term social and economic benefits evaluative judgement

One of the clearest outcomes of PiP is that parents leave with practical strategies and plans for how they will re-engage with their children and, where appropriate, co-parents or partners.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the course, facilitators encourage participants to think ahead about applying what they learn, resulting in many parents formulating concrete approaches to rebuild and strengthen relationships after release. During the interviews, parents often shared their specific post-release plans and strategies. These focused on reconnecting with their children and rebuilding trust and planning meaningful first interactions - as a way to support that reconnection. Others recognised the importance of taking a gradual approach, allowing space and time to re-establish trust. Participants with very strained situations, such as those with protection orders or children in guardianship, also devised ways to stay connected within legal constraints. One participant, unable to contact his kids immediately due to a court order, focused on self-improvement and letter writing. Others mentioned using indirect means like communicating through whānau or sending drawings/cards to maintain a thread of connection until direct contact is possible. Facilitators and staff observed these forward-looking behaviours with optimism. Staff noted that after the PiP programme, men

<sup>13</sup> Please note we are referring to strategies not implementation. This is an important distinction as we did not explore the impact beyond the prison environment.

showed a “shift in mindset” toward taking responsibility in their family roles, and facilitators reported that participants could identify ways to implement change to improve their parenting immediately post-programme. This demonstrates that strategy development was a concrete outcome of the course. Overall, PiP graduates are not leaving with just abstract hopes – they have formulated strategies and plans for engaging with their children and partners, ranging from first-meeting plans and daily communication practices to conflict resolution approaches and sustained personal growth to support their family.

PiP participants clearly recognise the intergenerational impact of incarceration and are strongly motivated to break cycles of harm for the benefit of their children and whānau. They consistently demonstrated an awareness of how their incarceration and past behaviours have affected their children and families, and they expressed a strong determination to ensure their children do not follow the same path. The programme has been particularly effective in helping parents understand the long-term consequences of their actions and reinforcing their commitment to change.

Many acknowledged intergenerational trauma, cycles of crime, and systemic patterns of incarceration. Some reflected on their own upbringing and how their experiences as children had shaped them - emphasising the importance of doing things differently for the next generation. This recognition was often paired with a desire to repair past harms. Participants spoke about using open communication, offering apologies to family members, and being more patient and emotionally present as practical ways to disrupt intergenerational patterns of neglect or abuse.

Some parents described how their children were already showing signs of being affected by their incarceration - such as emotional distress or behavioural issues - and expressed concern that, without intervention, those children might face similar challenges. For these participants, PiP reinforced both the urgency and hope that change is possible. Participants are leaving PiP not only with parenting knowledge and skills, but with a strengthened generational perspective. Many spoke about not wanting their children to experience what they had, or to end up in prison themselves. This kind of insight and motivation significantly enhances the potential for long-term positive social and economic outcomes, both for participants and for their whānau.

## 6.0 Recommendations - Providing further value

Given the positive findings of the evaluation, there are areas that could be considered to provide additional value for the resources invested. While PiP is meeting many of its intended outcomes - particularly in fostering parental motivation and confidence, strengthening family connections, and equipping participants with practical parenting strategies - opportunities remain to enhance its reach, sustainability, and long-term impact.

### Efficient and equitable management of resources

#### Scheduling, contracts, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

1. Consider revisiting the intake screening process to ensure it assesses participants' current parenting situations, levels of contact with children, parenting goals, and release timelines. Efforts should be made to prioritise parents who have clear engagement potential and will benefit most from the programme, ensuring efficient resource allocation.
2. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning by convening regular practitioner and stakeholder meetings to share insights, incorporate feedback, and explore programme content and delivery. This could also include reviewing the versatility of the programme as facilitators reported varying approaches and understanding of this.
3. Prioritise co-gendered facilitation teams and actively recruit facilitators who have lived parenting experience. This approach can enhance the programme's authenticity, build trust, and strengthen engagement with participants. However, it is recognised that men remain under-represented in frontline social work (14–15% of practising social workers), which can constrain efforts to staff fully co-gendered facilitation teams. In addition, sector under-funding further limits recruitment and remuneration capacity for services such as PiP.
4. Encourage and support DoC efforts to deliver the PiP programme at the same time as the other parenting courses. Coordinated delivery allows participants to reinforce and apply learning across courses, strengthening the continuity of parenting support - an essential factor in sustaining behaviour change and improving post-release family outcomes.

### Programme delivery is equitable, relevant, and efficient

#### Course content and delivery

5. Further incorporate Te ao Māori perspectives, tikanga, mātauranga Māori to strengthen engagement and relevance for Māori parents. This can be achieved through active engagement and co-design with PSN's Māori team, ensuring cultural practices, values, and language are authentically embedded throughout delivery. Such integration can improve engagement, foster trust, and increase the programme's relevance and impact for Māori participants.
6. Consider having FWN practitioners review the delivery of the PiP programme. This should focus on being able to adapt the programme content and the core information that needs to be covered during the seven sessions.
7. Regularly update the PiP programme content to reflect contemporary parenting issues, including social media use, online safety, drugs and alcohol, vaping, and other challenges that face parents and children today.

8. Consider developing tailored formats for short-stay and long-term participants. Offer a condensed, practically oriented version for short-stay/remand participants, focused on immediate relationship-building strategies, while providing a deeper reflective programme for long-term participants, supporting sustained parenting identity development and relationship repair.
9. Consider the design and delivery of gender-specific content for family violence modules, recognising the different experiences, needs, and roles of men (often perpetrators) and women (often survivors/victims). Consider leveraging PSN's internal capabilities i.e., Shine to support this.
10. While facilitators are already trained social workers, ongoing professional development could focus on the specific trauma experiences common among incarcerated parents, including grief, guilt, shame, and relational loss. Ongoing training could also ensure facilitators remain up to date with emerging research and best-practice evidence in trauma-informed care.

**Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities, and society**

**Whānau bonds, lifelong learning, and positive change**

11. Consider offering parents ready-to-use communication resources - such as handouts with conversation starters, suggested phone call topics, and tips for meaningful interactions with children - to help them apply programme learnings straight away. This is especially valuable given the limited opportunities many participants have for direct communication with their children.
12. Consider practical, low-cost options such as take-home materials, reflection workbooks, or information on self-paced parenting resources. These resources can help parents who expressed a strong desire to keep learning and developing their parenting skills after completing the programme to maintain their momentum and continue building on what they have learned.
13. Consider further support for practical opportunities focused on relationship-building with children/whānau. Continue and expand existing activities that enable parents to express care and connection - such as personalised cards and letters. These tangible gestures are highly valued and are important for those with limited or no direct contact with their children. They offer a meaningful way to maintain whānau bonds and demonstrate ongoing parental presence despite incarceration-related restrictions.
14. Continue to celebrate and recognise parent achievement to support whānau connection and self-esteem. Graduation ceremonies are a highly meaningful and impactful part of the PiP programme, with participants receiving certificates to mark completion. Consider advocating for family members to join parents at graduation to further celebrate the milestone and reinforce positive identity shifts, enhance self-esteem, and validate parenting achievements and commitment to positive change.

## 7.0 Conclusion

This evaluation highlights the importance of understanding value across multiple dimensions directly relevant to the Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme. The detailed rubrics, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, provided transparency for evaluative judgements and supported critical reflection on the data to assess how value was created.

The PiP programme delivers meaningful value by equipping incarcerated parents with practical parenting tools, fostering self-confidence, and supporting positive identity development, despite the inherent constraints of the prison environment. The evaluation found that the programme is well-received across stakeholders, underpinned by strong facilitation and relational delivery, and shows promising short- to medium-term outcomes in parenting confidence, motivation, and engagement with children, whānau and families where possible. While long-term impacts on families and communities remain largely prospective, the programme's potential to support intergenerational change and reintegration is evident.

These findings underscore the significance of PiP as a rehabilitative initiative that promotes individual and whānau wellbeing and social inclusion. To build on this momentum, future efforts may seek to refine participant selection processes, deepen cultural responsiveness, and tailor family violence content to further reflect gendered experiences. Making concerted efforts to address these areas will help PiP maximise the value of resources and ensure it continues to contribute meaningfully to Aotearoa's justice and social service landscape.

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## 9.0 Appendices

### Appendix A – Family Northern Parenting Programme Flyer



#### Family Works Parenting Programme

Looking for parenting advice and support?

Need some ideas and suggestions that can help you be an even better dad/mum

Family Works is offering a 7- session programme for parents/carers

##### Session topics:

- Modelling behaviour, children see children do
- Child directed play, how to play with your child
- Ages and stages
- Positive attention and encouragement
- Common Behaviour Problems
- Parenting styles
- Conflict management

"Awesome, liked the bit about playing with my children"

"I want to be the best role model for my son, I did not have a role model"

previous Parenting Programme clients

Family Works provides counselling, social work services, budgeting services, and a range of group programmes for children, young people, parents/caregivers and families.

## Appendix B – Parenting in Prison Theory of Change



### PARENTING IN PRISON – THEORY OF CHANGE

#### PSN VISION: A BETTER LIFE FOR EVERYONE



Impact (contribution towards long-term social outcomes)

Social and Wellbeing Impact:  
Strong and connected families and communities

Positive intergenerational outcomes

Economic Impact:  
Reduced load on government

Outcome (longer term)

Improved wellbeing of child  
Improved parent / family wellbeing  
Better parent and child relationships

Positive parenting legacy (better family values, beliefs, attitudes for new generation)

Greater support networks for parents  
Reduced risk of reoffending  
Reduced family household costs

#### Assumptions

Parents are motivated throughout the programme

Parents volunteer to join the programme

Corrections staff support and facilitate access to the programme

Desire to be a parent

Parents have the opportunity to apply skills while in prison/ able to engage with children

DoC focus is also on social support.

Content is fit-for-purpose

Outcome (medium term)

Enhanced participants self-esteem

Increased use of positive parenting strategies to support children (applied the skills.)

Enhanced relationships and positive contact with family/children

Increased confidence maintaining relationships and engaging with children/whanau

Enhanced social and community access and inclusion (access to appropriate services & feel supported)

Strengthened sense of whanaungatanga (family connection, relationships and kinship)

Outcomes (immediate, short-term)

Increased parenting knowledge and skills to support or meet the needs of children, co-parent / families

Strengthened peer connection /support and co-learning

Increased motivation to be a better parent (enjoy being a parent)

Improved communication/ engagement with the child(ren) / co-parent/families

Increased knowledge & trust about accessing social services and peer support

Implemented the individual parenting support plans (go home or on release)  
Motived for learning (Positive learning experience)

Outputs (no. of)

Referrals (Registrations)

Client Assessments (prison & community)

Programmes (sessions run) in various location / modes (7 days/7 weeks)

Participants (prison & community)

Participants that completed (or attrition rate)

Visits/ interactions with children/ family

individual parenting support plans (IPSP) (go home or on release)

#### Risks

Government funding is stopped

Caregivers are unwilling to facilitate access to child

Facilitator and clients unable to connect and encourage engagement in programme

Re-traumatisation of clients and lack of follow-up

Activities

Stakeholder meetings/planning of service delivery

Pre needs assessment with clients (fit for group)

Parenting programme sessions (7 sessions prison and community setting; incl. facilitator presentations, goal setting, group work, individual tasks, skills-building exercises and role-playing scenarios to reinforce learning).

Pre/post Evaluation Survey. Individual session rating scale

Input/Resources

Qualified Programme Facilitators (SW)

Organisational Support Staff

Funding from Government, private donors and grants

Resources (education and information materials, food/drink, communication, transport)

Facilities (DoC, PSN)

Relationships & Referral network

Target Groups/ Service Audience

Direct - Parents (Grandparent) that come into contact with Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections. Indirect – children, families and whānau

Situation / Rationale for Service

Parents in prison often struggle to be a good parent due to a number of factors due to the absence of role models, violent or disrupted upbringing, trauma, difficulty expressing emotions and connecting with children and family. Parents may not have learned the required skills, information and attitudes required to parent effectively. The Parenting in Prison (PiP) programme seeks to fill key services gaps for parents in prison/community and addresses complex topics including family violence, conflict management, parenting styles and child development. Through this it seeks to enhance parenting skills, strengthen family connections, promote child wellbeing, and reduce the negative impacts of incarceration.

## Appendix C – Evaluation Rubrics

### Efficient and equitable management of resources

Funding and accountability			
Insufficient	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<i>[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]</i>	<p>Basic monitoring and evaluation processes are established, with some regular tracking of programme activities and outputs.</p> <p>Data is collected but may not be systematically analysed or used to inform programme decisions.</p>	<i>[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]</i>	<p>Programme embeds regular and consistent monitoring and evaluation and performance tracking.</p> <p>Evaluation insights are actively incorporated through feedback loops to drive learning, innovation and ongoing improvement.</p> <p>Data is transparently reported and contributes to wider accountability and strategic planning.</p>
	<p>Programme receives sufficient resourcing to meet some demand in some sites, but gaps remain.</p> <p>Most output targets (e.g., participant numbers, session delivery) are met.</p> <p>Staff receive some training and capable of delivering programme content to an acceptable standard.</p>		<p>Programme is highly resourced ensuring it meets existing demand across all sites.</p> <p>All intended outputs are met or exceeded expectations.</p> <p>Staff are well-trained, qualified, and demonstrate high competence and confidence in delivering content.</p>
Equitable and efficient service design			
Insufficient	Adequate	Good	Excellent
	<p>Programme <u>acknowledges</u> the lived experiences of parents and elements of content or delivery may reflect this, but incorporation is <u>limited and inconsistent</u>.</p>		<p>Programme <u>actively validates and draws</u> on the lived experiences of parents to enhance the equity and effectiveness of all programme aspects.</p>

	<p>Programme <u>draws</u> on some existing infrastructure, relationships and partnerships but is inconsistent across sites.</p> <p>Communication between stakeholder groups is <u>fragmented or ad hoc</u> at times.</p>		<p>Programme <u>makes full use</u> of existing infrastructure, relationships and partnerships enhancing efficiency and equity.</p> <p><u>Clear, consistent and effective communication</u> channels between stakeholder groups across all sites.</p>
	<p>Programme meets participant attendance requirements with minimal attrition.</p> <p>Engagement and participation is generally consistent across sites.</p>		<p>High participant retention and strong engagement and participation for duration of programme.</p>
<b>Stakeholder support and programme alignment</b>			
<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	<p>Most stakeholder groups and staff are engaged with support <u>generally consistent</u> across organisations, staff and sites.</p>		<p>Programme enjoys <u>high and sustained support</u> through stakeholder advocacy, collaboration and support that extends across organisations, staff and site locations.</p>
	<p>The programme shows <u>some alignment</u>. May have <u>some overlap</u> with existing programmes and services or limited differentiation in content and support.</p>		<p>Programme <u>aligns well</u> with existing justice, correctional and social service and programmes, strategies, goals and priorities for parents in prison. <u>Fills an important and distinct role</u> within suite of existing programmes available to parents.</p>
	<p>Programme has <u>some alignment</u> with non-violence prevention strategies and actions.</p> <p>Content is <u>relevant and generally applicable</u> for parents, though with limited depth or breadth.</p>		<p>Programme <u>is strongly aligned</u> with non-violence prevention strategies and actions.</p> <p><u>Relevant and applicable and trauma-informed content</u> on family violence for parents that foster critical reflection.</p>

## Programme delivery is equitable, relevant and efficient

Adaptable and equitable programme delivery			
Insufficient	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<i>[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]</i>	<p>Programme at times adapts to the differing needs and goals of parents.</p> <p>Practitioners demonstrate willingness to make some <u>adjustments</u> in their approach.</p>	<i>[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]</i>	<p>Programme is <u>highly responsive and adaptable</u> to the needs and goals of parents.</p> <p>Facilitators have <u>in-depth</u> experience delivering group programmes and have <u>strong confidence</u> and willingness to adapt their approach.</p>
	<p>Stakeholder groups demonstrate awareness of engagement barriers and make <u>some efforts</u> to reduce these and improve service delivery.</p> <p><u>Selection criteria exists</u> but may be applied inconsistently, resulting in varied access between sites.</p>		<p>All stakeholder groups actively work to <u>remove barriers</u> to participant engagement/participation and improve service delivery.</p> <p>Selection criteria are <u>clearly defined and applied consistently</u> across all sites.</p>
	<p>A <u>safe and supportive learning space</u> is fostered for parents with <u>few barriers reported that prevent learning and engagement</u> throughout the programme.</p>		<p>A <u>safe and supportive learning space</u> is <u>consistently</u> provided allowing parents to share their journey and participate in the programme.</p> <p>Participants <u>feel comfortable</u> sharing their experiences in a group setting.</p>
Culturally responsive approach			
Insufficient	Adequate	Good	Excellent
	<p>Programme and facilitators <u>show consideration of participants' cultural, ethnic, learning needs and whānau needs backgrounds</u>.</p>		<p>Programme and facilitators are <u>fully attuned and respectful</u> to the culture, ethnicity, learning needs, family and whānau needs of all participants.</p>

	<p>Programme <u>incorporates Te ao Māori and kaupapa Māori</u> which is evident in the content and delivery of some sessions.</p> <p>This is not embedded throughout the programme, but there are <u>intentional efforts</u> to draw on and reflect Māori worldviews.</p>		<p>Te ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori approaches are highly valued and <u>actively applied</u> throughout programmes and sites.</p> <p>Māori participants <u>feel seen, valued, and supported in ways that affirm their identity and experiences.</u></p>
<b>Relevant and effective content</b>			
<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	<p>Some participants report satisfaction with the programme.</p> <p>Feedback is <u>generally positive</u>, it may be mixed or limited to certain aspects or sites.</p>		<p>Participants report consistently high levels of satisfaction with the programme across all sites.</p> <p>Feedback highlights <u>strong engagement, relevance, and impact</u>, with few or no concerns raised.</p>
	<p>Some participants report feeling more aware of their parenting role and <u>capable of making small changes</u>.</p> <p>The sense of empowerment is not seen consistently across groups or sites.</p>		<p>Participants <u>consistently report feeling empowered and motivated</u> to make meaningful, sustained changes in their lives.</p> <p>Nearly all participants feel empowered to make positive changes in their lives.</p>
	<p>The programme <u>incorporates some evidence-based content</u>.</p> <p>Most parents find it <u>relevant and useful</u> for their situation.</p>		<p>Programme <u>integrates up-to-date evidence</u> throughout ensuring its content is <u>relevant and fit-for-purpose</u>.</p> <p>Parents view programme content as transformative and impactful.</p>

## Programme effectively generates social value for parents, children, whānau, communities and society

Parents experience improved outcomes			
Insufficient	Adequate	Good	Excellent
[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]	<p>The programme <u>meets minimum expectations</u>, with some participants reporting improved parenting knowledge, strategies and skills.</p> <p><u>Progress is evident</u>, but not consistent across all groups or sites. Some stakeholder feedback supports observed gains.</p>	[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]	<p>The programme consistently <u>exceeds expectations</u>. Nearly all participants report <u>significant gains</u> in parenting knowledge, strategies and skills.</p> <p>These outcomes are <u>strongly validated</u> by a broad range of stakeholders and evident across multiple sites.</p>
	<p>Some parents report <u>greater confidence</u> in their ability parent/co-parent and improved <u>personal self-esteem</u>.</p> <p>Validated across key stakeholder groups.</p>		<p>Parents consistently <u>report significant gains in parenting confidence and self-esteem</u> across all programme sites.</p> <p>Validated across key stakeholder groups.</p>
	<p>Some parents report some <u>positive engagement, communication and connection</u> with their children/family.</p> <p>Positive shifts are evident for some participants, though not consistently across the group.</p>		<p>Most parents report more positive engagement, communication and connection with their children/family.</p> <p>There is strong evidence of <u>strengthened whanaungatanga</u>.</p>
	Parents express <u>some motivation and interest</u> in pursuing other learning opportunities.		Most parents are <u>highly motivated</u> to take other opportunities to participate in further learning.
Support networks and inclusion in the community			

<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<i>[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]</i>	Some effort by parents is made to connect with peers but is <u>inconsistent or superficial</u> .	<i>[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]</i>	Parents <u>develop strong, positive and supportive connections</u> with peers, engaging in mutual learning and encouragement.
	Parents develop <u>some awareness of available community services and resources</u> in the community although this is inconsistent across groups.		Programme equips parents with <u>strong awareness and willingness</u> to reach out to available community services and resources that support their parenting journey.
<b>Children and families experience improved outcomes</b>			
	Parents report some improvement in family wellbeing with <u>mixed outcomes</u> across groups.  Participants <u>express some optimism</u> applying parenting knowledge and skills well in the future.		Parents report the programme have <u>improved family wellbeing</u> with application of learnt skills, knowledge, strategies and communication.  Participants <u>express strong optimism</u> in these and there to navigate future engagements with their children and co-parents.
	Parents report some improvements in their ability to connect and be positive role models for their children and family.  Outcomes are not consistently reported across participants, and the extent of change varies.		Parents <u>consistently</u> report the programme has improved their ability to <u>connect and be consistent positive role-models</u> for their children and family.
<b>Effective use of resources for rehabilitation and reintegration</b>			
<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<i>[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]</i>	Participants view the programme, skills learnt and support as useful. There is some uncertainty regarding its impact on their rehabilitation and reintegration.	<i>[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]</i>	Most participants view the programme, skills learnt, and support received as crucial to their rehabilitation and reintegration.

	Some participants express intent to make better choices as parents but <u>lack confidence about their post-release</u> .		Participants express strong confidence in maintaining positive behaviours as parents, with <u>clear plans for post-release success</u> .
Contribution to long-term social outcomes			
<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<i>[Below the level outlined in the criterion for adequate]</i>	Most participants <u>express willingness to connect</u> with family and children but lack a clear strategy for maintaining relationships and staying connected to support.	<i>[Between the levels outlined in the criterion for just adequate and excellent]</i>	Participants show <u>strong commitment to building relationships</u> , with clear strategies for staying connected and engaged with their children and family.
	Participants <u>recognise the impacts of incarceration</u> on children and family, although there <u>lack understanding and commitment</u> to making the necessary changes required to break the cycle.		Participants demonstrate <u>strong understanding of intergenerational trauma</u> and impact of incarceration on children and family.  <u>Strong commitment</u> expressed to breaking negative cycles.

***Ki te kotahi te kākaho ka whati, ki te kāpuia e kore e whati.***

*When we stand alone, we are vulnerable but together we are unbreakable.*



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