


**Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration  
Intensive Parole:  
*Program Evaluation Design***

Robert Barnoski

March 1999

 *Washington State  
Institute for  
Public Policy*

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**Washington State Institute  
for Public Policy**

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## **Background**

The 1997 Washington State Legislature provided intensive parole funding for up to 25 percent of the highest-risk youth placed in the custody of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA). The legislation directed that intensive parole be implemented by January 1, 1999, and include the following elements (RCW 13.40.210):

- 1) A case management system to include: assessment, classification, and selection criteria; individual case planning that incorporates a family and community perspective; a mixture of intensive surveillance and services; a balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with the imposition of realistic enforceable conditions; and service brokerage with community resources and linkage with social networks.
- 2) Transition services that transcend traditional agency boundaries and professional interests and include courts, institutions, aftercare, education, social and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and employment and vocational training.
- 3) A plan for information management and program evaluation that maintains close oversight over implementation and quality control and determines effectiveness of both process and outcomes.

In a note for the statute (RCW 13.40.212), the legislature finds that an intensive supervision program based on the following principles holds much promise and intends for JRA to create an intensive supervision program based on these principles:

- 1) Progressive increase in responsibility and freedom in the community,
- 2) Facilitation of youths' interaction and involvement with their communities,
- 3) Involvement of both the youth and targeted community support systems such as family, peers, schools, and employers, on qualities needed for constructive interaction and successful adjustment with the community,
- 4) Development of new resources, supports, and opportunities where necessary, and
- 5) Ongoing monitoring and testing of youth on their ability to abide by community rules and standards.

Much of the language for the principles in the intensive parole legislation comes directly from the Intensive Aftercare model of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).<sup>1</sup>

The legislature funded standard parole only for sex offenders. The length of standard parole was extended from a maximum of 18 months to a maximum of either 24 or 36 months for juvenile sex offenders. Intensive parole funding was to provide for up to 25 percent of the highest-risk JRA youth, for youth placed in boot camps, and youth committed to JRA for murder.

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<sup>1</sup> David Altschuler and Troy Armstrong, *Intensive Aftercare for High-Risk Juveniles: A Community Care Model*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 1994.

## ***Principles of Intensive Parole Model***

In response to this legislation, the JRA has adopted the OJJDP intensive aftercare program model. This model is based on the work of Troy Armstrong and David Altschuler.<sup>2</sup> The model includes a residential component delivered while the youth is under juvenile institutional custody, as well as an intensive community supervision component. Although this model has received national attention and is being implemented in four states,<sup>3</sup> there is no outcome data for its effectiveness. Washington is the only state implementing the model statewide.

The goals of the OJJDP intensive parole model are to maintain public protection in both the short-term and long-term, assure individual accountability, and provide treatment and support services. Their method for achieving these goals is through an overarching case management system that helps high-risk delinquents make the transition from secure confinement to community supervision. The five discrete components which define the program are initiated as soon as secure confinement begins, rather than waiting until the youth is released from confinement.

- Assessment, classification, and selection.
- Individual case planning incorporating a family and community perspective.
- A mix of intensive surveillance and services.
- A balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with the imposition of realistic, enforceable conditions.
- Service brokerage with community resources and linkage with social networks.

### **1. Assessment, classification, and selection**

The target population is that group of institutionalized juveniles who pose the highest risk of becoming repeat offenders in the community. Objectively determining which juveniles are at high risk of chronic delinquency requires the use of a risk-screening device that classifies juvenile offenders according to their probability of reconviction. This means that assessment and classification tools must be validated in the jurisdiction.

### **2. Individual case planning incorporating a family and community perspective**

Individualized planning begins at admission to a secure correctional facility for youth identified by the risk assessment for participation in intensive parole. Case planning involves both the institutional and community supervision staff determining: (1) how identified need-related risk factors will be addressed in the facility and then in the community after release; (2) the special needs of the youth, particularly those linked to the youth's social network (family, close friends, peers in general) and community (schools, work-place, church, training programs, specialized treatment programs); and (3) how the total set of risks, needs, and associated circumstances will be addressed during a phased transition from confinement to the community. The matching of intensive parole youth with programs and people in the community requires an understanding of each program's intervention strategy (degree of change sought and attributes targeted) and organizing model (processes such as how reinforcements and sanctions are used, how limits are set, and how progress through the program is directed). To preserve the gains made while in confinement, community care must interconnect the youth's activities while confined to those in the community.

### **3. A mix of intensive surveillance and services**

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<sup>2</sup> Altschuler, David M. and Troy L. Armstrong, *Intensive Aftercare for the High-Risk Juvenile Parolee: Issues and Approaches in Reintegration and Community Supervision*. In "Intensive Interventions with High-Risk Youths: Promising Approaches in Juvenile Probation and Parole," Troy Armstrong (ed.), 1991, Monsey, New York: Criminal Justice Press.

<sup>3</sup> Altschuler, David and Troy Armstrong, *Intensive Aftercare for High-Risk Juveniles: A Community Care Model*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 1994.

Although closer supervision is important, a strictly surveillance-oriented approach does not address need-related risk factors. If risk factors are linked principally to the family and the home, school and learning difficulties, negative peer influences, and substance abuse, intensive parole should ensure that core services are used and families and friends are involved on a regular basis. Supervision is not merely a means to deter misconduct, it is to provide staff with the means to: (1) recognize immediately when infractions, as well as achievements, have taken place, (2) know beforehand when circumstances may be prompting misconduct or leading to problems, and (3) respond accordingly by relying on both reward and graduated sanctions.

#### **4. A balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with realistic, enforceable parole conditions**

Parolees are often burdened with unrealistic and unenforceable parole conditions and devoid of any positive reinforcement, rewards, or inducements. Rewards and praise play an important role in demonstrating the benefits and satisfactions of socially acceptable accomplishments. Approaches can vary from relatively simple mechanisms involving frequent case reviews incorporating other peers and family, to elaborately structured token economies in which privileges and rewards are tied to the attainment of specific goals. Since closer supervision can result in more infractions and technical violations, a hierarchy of consequences is required.

#### **5. Service brokerage with community resources and linkage with social networks**

Brokerage of services must focus on: (1) improving the family situation, (2) intervening with the peer group, and (3) reversing the cycle of school failure to reduce the risk for re-offending. These goals require linkage with major social networks which require staff to actively work on reinforcing, or if necessary developing, a supportive network for each youth. Second, it is essential to devise a process to ensure coordination and continuity in work being done on a case and to monitor the extent and quality of the service provision.

The OJJDP model describes an ideal parole system. Recent meta-analysis<sup>4</sup> and research literature reviews<sup>5</sup> are not encouraging of intensive supervision as an effective intervention for reducing recidivism. This research indicates that the success of intensive parole depends upon the nature and quality of the intervention. Family oriented interventions, such as Multi-systemic Therapy and Function Family Therapy, have been shown to reduce recidivism even among high-risk populations. In addition, cognitive behavioral therapies, such as Aggression Replacement Training and EQUIP, have been shown to be effective. The inclusion of these types of approaches as services brokered for intensive parole youth should increase the likelihood for success.

### ***Management Information and Program Evaluation***

A management information system is required to ensure the integrity of day-to-day operations and performance. No test of the model is possible if implementation diverges from design principles and elements. The availability of timely information enables needed adjustments and changes to be made before the program has veered substantially off course.

### ***Evaluation Schedule***

The JRA contracted with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to evaluate the implementation of intensive parole, determine whether the program reduces recidivism, and analyze its costs and benefits to Washington State taxpayers.

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<sup>4</sup> Lipsy, Mark W. and David B Wilson, *Effective Intervention for Serious Juvenile Offenders: A Synthesis of Research*, Paper prepared for OJJDP Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders, April 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Tolan, Patrick and Nancy Guerra, *What Works in Reducing Adolescent Violence: An Empirical Review of the Field Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence*, July 1994.

The Legislature specified that JRA report annually on the status of intensive parole beginning December 1, 1999. Institute reports will be completed to meet the legislative schedule.

In developing the evaluation schedule, the Institute is assuming that youth participating in the programs prior to January 1999 will not be suitable for inclusion in the evaluation study. This allows the JRA and various service providers to develop the expertise to deliver a quality program.

### **Evaluation Schedule**

<b>Evaluation Event</b>	<b>Event Date</b>
End of standard parole	Jun - 1998
<b>Start of program</b>	
Start of no parole high-risk comparison group	Jul - 1998
Start of partial IP comparison group	Oct - 1998
<b>IP Community Supervision Group</b>	
Start of IP community supervision group	Jan - 1999
Sufficient youth in community supervision group	Jun - 1999
Start of follow-up period	Jun - 1999
<b>Process report</b>	<b>Nov - 1999</b>
End of 6-month follow-up	Dec - 1999
End of 12-month follow-up	Jun - 2000
<b>Process report</b>	<b>Nov - 2000</b>
End of 18-month follow-up	Dec - 2000
End of 6-month recidivism	Dec - 2000
End of 12-month recidivism	Jun - 2001
<b>12-month outcome report</b>	<b>Nov - 2001</b>
End of 18-month recidivism	Dec - 2001
<b>18-month outcome report</b>	<b>Nov - 2002</b>
<b>IP Residential Supervision Group</b>	
Start of IP residential group - full model	Feb - 1999
<b>Process report</b>	<b>Nov - 1999</b>
Sufficient youth in group	Feb - 2000
<b>Process report</b>	<b>Nov - 2000</b>
Release to community supervision	Feb - 2001
Start of follow-up period	Feb - 2001
End of 6-month follow-up	Aug - 2001
<b>6-month outcome report</b>	<b>Nov - 2001</b>
End of 12-month follow-up	Feb - 2002
End of 6-month recidivism	Aug - 2002
End of 18-month follow-up	Aug - 2002
<b>12-month outcome report</b>	<b>Nov - 2002</b>
End of 12-month recidivism	Feb - 2003
End of 18-month recidivism	Aug - 2003
<b>18-month outcome report</b>	<b>Nov - 2003</b>



## ***Intensive Parole Process Evaluation Design***

The JRA assigned a senior staff person, who piloted a similar program in JRA's Region 1, to implement the Intensive Parole (IP) program. The JRA formed a committee to review the model and other relevant background materials, and make recommendations for implementation. In addition to following the OJJDP model, JRA added a component that follows the Competency Model being implemented in JRA. Troy Armstrong provided technical assistance in the development of the Washington State intensive parole model.

The enabling legislation requires a program evaluation that maintains close oversight over implementation and quality control and determines process effectiveness. The JRA has responsibility for implementing intensive parole and quality assurance and has contracted with the Institute to conduct the process evaluation.

The process evaluation will examine how well the intensive parole model elements specified in RCW 13.04.210 have been implemented in actual practice. These elements are:

- 1) A case management system to include:
  - a) assessment, classification, and selection criteria;
  - b) individual case planning that incorporates a family and community perspective;
  - c) a mixture of intensive surveillance and services;
  - d) a balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with the imposition of realistic enforceable conditions; and
  - e) service brokerage with community resources and linkage with social networks.
- 2) Transition services that transcend traditional agency boundaries and professional interests and include courts, institutions, aftercare, education, social and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and employment and vocational training.
- 3) A plan for information management and program evaluation that maintains close oversight over implementation and quality control and determines effectiveness of both process and outcomes.

The degrees to which the following principles, noted in RCW 13.04.212, are addressed will also be described:

- 1) Progressive increase in responsibility and freedom in the community,
- 2) Facilitation of youths' interaction and involvement with their communities,
- 3) Involvement of both the youth and targeted community support systems, such as family, peers, schools, and employers, on qualities needed for constructive interaction and successful adjustment with the community,
- 4) Development of new resources, supports, and opportunities where necessary, and
- 5) Ongoing monitoring and testing of youth on their ability to abide by community rules and standards.

## ***Process Evaluation Data***

The intensive parole plan and implementation materials will be reviewed in light of the elements and principles in the enabling legislation. All process measures for actual implementation of the IP program will be based on administrative data collected by JRA as a part of administration of the program. These measures will include contacts, adherence to standards, and services received.

## ***Intensive Parole Outcome Evaluation Design***

### **Research Design**

The best research design is to have youth eligible for a program randomly assigned to either the control or the program group. Any outcome differences between the two groups can be attributed to the treatment since it is the sole difference between the groups. This approach is not feasible with the Intensive Parole program because JRA has determined it will not release a higher-risk youth without supervision.

Since a random assignment is not possible, a matched comparison group method will be used to measure the Intensive Parole program effectiveness. Only youth determined to be in the 25 percent highest-risk level are eligible for intensive parole. A similar criteria must be applied to all comparison groups.

**Full Intensive Parole Group:** The principle Intensive Parole program group will consist of youth who have received both the residential and community service components. This is referred to as the full intensive parole model. Youth admitted into the residential Intensive Parole program must serve their entire sentence before being released onto intensive community supervision. Evaluating the recidivism rates for youth given the full model cannot be completed until 2.5 years after all the youth admitted have been released.

**Community Supervision Intensive Parole Group:** A second intensive parole group will consist of youth who were given the community supervision component of intensive parole but not the residential. These youth allow a comparison of the impact of the residential component in addition to the community supervision component.

**Prior Standard Parole Comparison Group:** One comparison group will include high-risk youth who were placed on standard parole in the year prior to the implementation of intensive parole. Comparing the intensive parole group to regular parole estimates the benefit of intensive beyond that of standard parole.

**Contemporaneous No-Parole Comparison Group:** A second comparison group will consist of youth being released concurrently with the intensive parole group with risk scores slightly below the intensive parole eligibility score. Youth with slightly lower-risk scores have the same high likelihood of recidivating. This comparison allows an estimation of the effect of intensive parole over no parole for a contemporaneous group.

**Additional Group Comparisons:** In addition, youth with risk scores below the cut-off who did not receive parole after July 1, 1998, will be compared to youth with similar scores who did receive parole prior to July 1, 1998. This comparison allows an estimation of the effect of parole over no parole for youth with lower-risk scores.

## ***Program Eligibility***

The JRA has a validated risk assessment instrument, the Initial Security Classification Assessment (ISCA), that will be used to determine intensive parole eligibility.<sup>6</sup> ISCA scores are available for all JRA youth. JRA has determined that a score above 32 points on the ISCA identifies the 25 percent highest-risk youth and that youth with an ISCA of at least 32 points are eligible for intensive parole. In addition, all sex offenders who are a Level III on the SOST assessment are eligible for intensive parole. Finally, all youth placed in the Basic Training Camp, and all youth convicted of murder are eligible for intensive parole.

## ***Outcome Measures***

The principle outcome measure will be the comparison of recidivism rates between the control and program groups for each program.<sup>7</sup> Preliminary 6-month and 12-month recidivism rates will be calculated, as well as the final 18-month rate. The Office of the Administrator for the Courts Justice Information System will be the source for estimating recidivism rates.

Interim outcomes will include changes in dynamic risk and protective factors as measured by the Intensive Parole Risk Assessment. These results will be available after the first three months following implementation and every three months for the next 12 months. These reports will also be done for each region to provide information on whether the programs are affecting the targeted risk and protective factors.

The Institute will explore the use of more sophisticated statistical techniques, such as survival analysis, to provide results as early as possible.

## ***Sample Size***

The number of youth in the program and control groups must be large enough to detect differences between the two groups given the anticipated program effect on recidivism. If we assume a significance level of .05, statistical power level of .80, and expect a .10 effect size, then 785 youth are required. This means having 390 youth in the IP program and 390 in the comparison group.

JRA estimates that about 30 youth per month will be eligible for intensive parole, so it will take 13 months to obtain the needed number of youth in the IP program. If fewer youth are actually assigned to IP, then we will need to change the significance level to .10.

Once the full-model youth are admitted to JRA, estimates from MAPPER data indicate that 65 percent of youth with a score of 32 and above will be released in six months, 85 percent in 12 months and slightly over 90 percent in 18 months. That is, in one year following entry into the IP program, 85 percent of the youth will be released to community supervision.

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<sup>6</sup> *Juvenile Rehabilitation Assessments: Validity Review and Recommendations*, Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, September 1998.

<sup>7</sup> *Standards for Improving Research Effectiveness in Adult and Juvenile Justice*, Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, December 1997.

### ***Program Effectiveness — the Effect Size***

Program effectiveness will be expressed as a *change in an outcome measure due to the program's impact upon the youth*. This change will be expressed as the *difference* between the program and control group outcomes at the end of the follow-up period. The principle outcome measure is recidivism.

The program group will also be compared on improvements made in risk and protective factors between the beginning and end of the youth's participation in the program and at the end of the follow-up period.

### ***Data Collection***

The Institute assumes it will have access to the MAPPER data that indicate which youth were assigned to the IP program. The Institute will rely upon JRA administrative data to measure how well the program is being implemented. The Institute also assumes it will have access to the risk assessment and competency data collected by JRA on the IP youth. The Institute will use the Office of the Administrator for the Courts Justice Information System data to measure recidivism.