Keeping It **Real**

Developing Simulation Training for Child Welfare Workers

Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Simulation training recreates real-life conditions to provide a realistic experience for students, trainees, or new and existing workers to help prepare them for real-world interactions (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2015). This publication provides background information on why and how simulation training is used in child welfare and outlines five key tasks for developing and implementing simulation programs.

Background on Simulation Training Programs

Simulation training can help workers and supervisors safely practice their skills in an environment similar to the complex situations they will encounter in their practice (Logie et al., 2013; Singer, 2018). During the simulation process, participants build skills that they can later transfer to real-life situations working with children, families, and system partners. Through practicing, building skills, and receiving constructive feedback, participants not only improve their competencies for child welfare work but also increase their confidence and self-efficacy. Preliminary evaluation studies suggest that simulation programs, in turn, contribute to improvements in worker retention (Chiu & Cross, 2019).

Simulation programs integrate aspects of good training practices:

◆ In developing simulation scenarios, trainers break down skills into manageable subsets that allow skills to be built in a thoughtful way that increases participants' chance of success (Logie et al., 2013; Singer, 2018).

◆ Simulation training aligns with deliberate practice theory (University of Utah College of Social Work, 2019). This theory emphasizes the importance of practicing specific behaviors beyond current skill levels and offering opportunities for coaching, feedback, and reflection (Ericsson, 2006).

◆ Simulation training also can incorporate problem-based learning (Chiu & Cross, 2018). This active learning approach builds critical thinking skills as participants apply their knowledge and skills to develop solutions to a defined problem (Murphy et al., 2011).

Read This If:

You are implementing simulation training at your agency and want practical guidance for developing and running your program.

Learn More About:

◆ How to put together a team and reach out to partners

◆ How to analyze workforce training needs

◆ How to conceptualize and design simulation trainings

◆ How to deliver training

◆ How to monitor, evaluate, improve, and scale up

◆ Jurisdiction examples

Two Key Types of Simulation

Onsite – Experiential learning that takes place in a realistic physical environment (e.g., a home or classroom) specifically designed to recreate situations that child welfare workers might encounter in the field.

Virtual reality – Experiential learning that occurs in a virtual digital environment designed to allow child welfare workers to practice skills they will need in the field. Sessions are delivered via computer, other digital device, or a virtual reality headset.

Child welfare agencies use simulation training to help workers develop a wide variety of skills, from conducting investigations and safety assessments (Chiu & Cross, 2018) and improving interviewing techniques (Bogo et al., 2014) to participating in court proceedings (Reeves et al., 2018). Simulation training can also be used to train workers to be more culturally responsive (Leake, Holt, Potter, & Ortega, 2010) and improve worker safety (Service Access & Management, Inc. & Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, 2016). In addition to training new and existing workers, agencies have begun to explore how simulation can be used with more experienced workers, supervisors, and resource families.

For more information on simulation benefits and to see program examples, visit https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/workforce/simulationtraining/.

How to Develop a Simulation Training Program

Developing and implementing a simulation training program is a process that takes time and effort. The process varies across agencies depending on workforce and community needs, experience with simulation training, available resources, and other considerations. The tasks described in exhibit 1 and detailed below can help an agency team work through the process of developing and implementing a simulation training program. Though the tasks are laid out sequentially, they will not necessarily always be linear because teams may need to start some tasks simultaneously and loop back to previous tasks as needs arise. For example, if an agency decides to scale up the program by developing a new scenario, it may need to revisit the tasks of teaming and designing the training, among others.

Exhibit 1: Tasks for Developing and Implementing a Simulation Training Program

Convene a team and reach out to potential partners → Analyze workforce training needs → Conceptualize and design trainings → Deliver training → Monitor, evaluate, improve, and scale up

1. Convene a Team and Reach Out to Potential Partners

Once agency decision-makers agree to pursue a simulation training program, it is helpful for agency leaders and the training director to put together a diverse team to oversee the work of program development and implementation. The team will (Capacity Building Center for States [Center for States], 2018d):

◆ Support and oversee development and implementation of the simulation training program

◆ Champion the program and secure the necessary resources for getting it off the ground

◆ Address potential challenges and opportunities in program development and implementation

◆ Use data to monitor progress of the simulation training program and make informed decisions to ensure the program's success at the agency

Before putting together the simulation program development and implementation team, the training director should determine the tasks necessary for developing and implementing the program and what type of skills, knowledge, and input are needed to accomplish them.

The most effective teams bring together varied perspectives—agency personnel (particularly field staff and supervisors who have experience with the subject of the training), families and youth (who can help make the training scenarios more realistic), system partners with expertise specific to the training (e.g., court personnel and judges, medical professionals, or experts on risk and protective factors), and other stakeholders with different roles, talents, perspectives, and skill sets. If feasible, teams should also involve individuals representing the diverse characteristics of the communities served by the agency; this can help the team better understand the knowledge and skills the simulation training program needs to address (Center for States, 2018d).

Potential Simulation Training Program Development and Implementation Team Members

The agency should consider including individuals from the following stakeholder groups on the team:

- ◆ Trainers
- ◆ Agency staff from all levels and different program areas (e.g., leadership, mid-level managers, supervisors, caseworkers, researchers, evaluators, staff with communication experience, human resources staff)
- ◆ University partners
- ◆ Family members (e.g., resource parents, families of origin, kinship caregivers, and youth)
- ◆ Representatives from tribes, courts, and related state agencies (if applicable to the agency and training being developed)
- ◆ Relevant external and community partners, leaders, and representatives

For simulation training development, university staff are especially useful collaborators in assessing agency needs, developing a simulation training program to address them, and helping evaluate the training to ensure it is doing what it was created to do (Chiu & Cross, 2019). Collaborations with community partners may offset costs by providing access to local resources and volunteers who can help staff an onsite simulation program, as well as by providing technical expertise. Local hospitals, university nursing programs, and medical schools can be especially valuable partners in helping design and provide resources and staff for simulations focused on communicating about a child's health and well-being (Goulet et al., 2020).

★ Example From the Field: Community Collaboration

As part of its pre-service training program for new workers, the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) Academy for Workforce Development created a simulation training program in partnership with the state's Court Support Services Division and FAVOR, a family advocacy organization. As part of this work, FAVOR trains family members who have child welfare experience to assist in the scenario development and interact with participants during simulation, which makes the simulation experience more realistic for the participants. The space where the simulations are conducted was provided by Connecticut Court Support Services Division (though the organization does not participate in the training itself). As DCF identifies additional simulation components, it plans to continue partnering with these organizations.

The Academy for Workforce Development recently obtained permission to bring on two youth consultants who will be responsible for reviewing curricula to ensure that youth perspective is clearly represented in training, which will help simulation training participants gain experience interviewing youth and learn how to engage with and assess youth strengths and needs. The next step will be to develop the Academy's simulation scenarios that involve youth either in person or virtually.

An important part of bringing together a team is developing a team charter and communication plan. The team charter is a formal document that the team creates to clarify and facilitate the team's work, including timeframes, roles, and responsibilities (Center for States, 2019). Developing a comprehensive, open communication plan is important for all team members to effectively work together, share ideas, and sustain engagement with the project. For more details on selecting team members and creating a team charter and communication plan, see the Center's "Change and Implementation in Practice: Teaming" brief and "Strategic Planning in Child Welfare: Strategies for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement" factsheet.

2. Analyze the Agency's Workforce Training Needs

Analyzing the agency's workforce training needs can help the team determine what kind of simulation training would best benefit the agency workforce and help specify learning objectives. For example, an identified need to be better prepared to work with the court system might require practice in a mock courtroom setting, while a need to engage fathers might necessitate practicing motivational interviewing skills. Teams may draw from existing agency workforce training needs assessments or conduct new ones if needed. The workforce training needs analysis can also help identify areas for building training capacity (e.g., resources, infrastructure, culture, knowledge, skills, partnerships) (Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy, 2009).

To supplement information in the workforce training needs assessment, the team may explore topics specific to simulation training by conducting surveys or focus groups with the agency workforce. Questions might include:

◆ In what specific areas would you benefit from more practice (e.g., having conversations with families on challenging topics such as suspicion of child abuse or substance abuse)?

◆ What is your preferred format for training (insert potential options)? Why?

In addition, the team may analyze recruitment and retention data collected by the agency's continuous quality improvement team or other agency workgroups to identify how simulation may address identified barriers.

Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning is a learning modality that enables participants to explore real-life situations with an emphasis on problem solving and teamwork (Murphy et al., 2011). In problem-based learning, a discipline-appropriate problem that takes into account participants' preexisting knowledge is presented at the beginning of the learning process. While discussing the problem, participants develop skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and teamwork by synthesizing classroom-based and practical knowledge to come up with a consensus solution (Walker et al., 2015). Problem-based learning can be used as part of simulation training to develop critical thinking skills, enhance facilitation of simulations, and inform the debriefing process. It can also help participants identify gaps in their knowledge and training without putting children and families at risk.

The Center's "Change and Implementation in Practice: Problem Exploration" brief (Center for States, 2018c) can help the team dig deeper into the data to better understand the agency's training needs. More information and resources for conducting a workforce needs assessment can be found in the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development's "Collaborating to Conduct a Workforce Needs Assessment."

3. Conceptualize and Design Simulation Trainings

Once the development and implementation team has assessed the specific training needs of the agency's workforce and explored how simulation training can address them, the team can begin developing the simulation training itself (Singer, 2018). Teams may opt for an onsite simulation program, a virtual reality simulation training, or a combination. For either type, the basic development steps are similar, as shown in exhibit 2.

The process of developing a simulation training to meet an agency's needs takes time and collaboration among several groups of stakeholders, such as the implementation team, agency leaders and staff, and community stakeholders. As noted above, at this point it is critical to have a communication plan in place so that all participants are informed and continue to support development of the training program.

When teams are beginning to think about the structure and content of simulation training scenarios, it can be helpful for them to observe or even participate in an existing simulation training in another jurisdiction to better understand what it looks like and how it feels to be in the simulation. This can help them to better think through the design of the training, as well as articulate and describe the training to their partners and staff (Goulet et al., 2020).

Exhibit 2: Steps in Developing Simulation Trainings

- Identify and map competencies participants will develop in training
- Develop simulation training vignette, structure, and format
- Select the right training environment
- Create and assess list of resources necessary to mimic real-life conditions
- Plan for actor and participant preparation
- Create training schedule
- Develop evaluation plan

Identify and Map the Competencies Participants Will Develop in the Training

This step involves three tasks:

1. Using the workforce needs assessment, identify the competencies (e.g., skills, knowledge, practice behaviors, ethics, and values) that training participants are working on during the training.
2. List what participants will need to know to develop each competence, as well as what they need to do to demonstrate that they are developing or have developed that competence (Singer, 2018).
3. Map the desired competencies to real-life scenarios that enable a training participant to practice the necessary skills.

At this point, the team should consult with field instructors, subject matter experts (SMEs), caseworkers, families, and others in the field to ensure that the scenarios are consistent with what is actually happening in the field (Singer, 2018). They should also work with agency trainers to see how the new training fits within the existing training curriculum.

Those teams developing a virtual simulation need to work with software developers to explore whether simulation trainings exist that meet their needs or begin thinking about developing new ones.

Develop Simulation Training Vignette, Structure, and Format

In developing an onsite simulation, after mapping the competencies onto a scenario, the team should work with SMEs to write a detailed vignette that captures the competencies that training participants will be working toward. This includes thinking through the simulation structure and format in relation to training participants' needs

Asking questions such as these can help shape the structure and format of an onsite simulation (Singer, 2018):

- How long will each simulation be?
- How many participants will there be?
- How many participants will be giving feedback to their peers?
- When will the trainer or coach give feedback? Will other participants provide feedback?
- Are other external parties involved?
- Will the participants complete any type of reflection activity?

The size of the class is an especially critical factor in developing the simulation experience. Some trainers recommend an onsite class size no larger than 10 active participants to ensure that everyone gets the time they need in the simulation and to facilitate debriefing (Goulet et al., 2020).

Teams developing virtual reality simulations will work with software developers and possibly university or other subject matter partners to identify, modify, or create training vignettes that meet their content and format needs. In developing a virtual reality simulation training, it is important to ensure that the training reflects both workforce training needs and the characteristics of the community with which participants are working. Focusing on both of these things will ensure that participants can practice using their skills in an environment similar to the one they will encounter in real life. Usability testing—a process that helps teams quickly try out critical intervention elements, assess their functionality, and then refine or clarify as needed—may be especially helpful as agency teams and software developers work back and forth to refine the training scenarios (Center for States, 2018a).

★ **Example From the Field:**
Finding the Right Environments For Your Simulation Training Needs

In 2013, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in partnership with four area universities, law enforcement and public health consultants, and other child welfare training SMEs, piloted a simulation training program that has since become integral to its new worker and ongoing training curriculum. The training was designed to allow participants to practice the following competencies:

◆ Assessment and observation
◆ Professional presence and self-awareness
◆ Interviewing (e.g., rapport building and engagement)
◆ Client communication (including "difficult conversations")
◆ Critical thinking and decision-making
◆ Collaboration across disciplines and professions (e.g., law enforcement, public health, education)
◆ Documentation
◆ Worker safety and situational awareness
◆ Policies, procedures, and legal issues

To meet these training needs, the team created several environments. The primary location is the Residential Simulation Lab at California State University, Los Angeles, a 550-square foot "apartment" that was created within a classroom and made to look like an actual living space. Additional smaller simulation rooms were created at California State University, Long Beach and the University of California, Los Angeles. When necessary, simulation rooms were also created in hotel room spaces.

DCFS used SME trainers to play the roles of family members in the training, which enabled them to provide detailed feedback and coaching throughout. DCFS' partnership with area universities to develop multiple training environments allowed program participants to practice a variety of skills and receive feedback to improve their performance.

Source: National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2015a

It is important for participants to receive feedback as part of the simulation training activities. Onsite programs often include several periods of feedback and debriefing with trainers and sometimes other participants. Many virtual reality training programs have built-in features that provide feedback electronically at the end of the simulation. In addition, organizers should provide time for an in-person debrief with training participants.

To see the benefits of simulation training, start small. At the beginning of developing the simulation training, agencies could introduce one selected component, perhaps with one scenario that focuses on one or two competencies or one space that can be a single classroom repurposed for the training. Once it is clear that the program is achieving the desired results, agencies can expand it to encompass additional training topics, different parts of the child protection process, or training for additional participant populations. Agencies can also consider the possibility of training participants revisiting the same topic at different points in their careers.

Select the Right Training Environment

The selection of training environment depends on whether the agency is implementing virtual or onsite simulation training. Though virtual training can be conducted in a group, it is most often done individually in an office or other site using a computer or virtual reality headset. Onsite trainings can occur in a variety of environments including a

classroom, house, mock courtroom, auditorium, or other setting designed to mimic real life locales. The choice of onsite setting is determined by the requirements of the simulation training, as well as available resources. Choice of setting should also reflect the environment that child welfare workers experience in that particular area (e.g., urban vs. rural) and should be adapted to be culturally appropriate to the local community.

Watch the videos on the [Keeping It Real webpage](#) to see how one state uses various environments in its simulation training, including home, medical lab, and court lab environments.

Create and Assess a List of Resources Necessary to Mimic Real-World Conditions

As with selecting an appropriate training environment, determining the necessary resources is contingent on the needs of the simulation training in question. Virtual reality training requires the simulation training software and the correct technology to use it. Additional items, such as candles that mimic unpleasant smells that workers might encounter, can help recreate potential risk or safety hazards that may be present in the real-life scenario. One established onsite program found that it takes a minimum of three staff members, including one who is experienced in the discipline being trained, to effectively run a day of simulation training (Goulet et al., 2020).

The tasks involved in this step:

1. **Brainstorm ideas for the resource list** with caseworkers, as well as families and youth (or judges and attorneys) who are members of the development team, as they will be able to identify whether various items are authentic to an environment and spot any gaps (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2015a). Then, prioritize the resources on the list in order of importance to the simulation scenario.

2. **Once the list is completed, assess the resources the agency already has**; examples include appropriate spaces, training staff, or technology.

3. **Determine resources that still need to be acquired**; examples include objects to make the simulation space appear true to life, actors to staff the simulation, and enough virtual headsets for the training to be completed on time.

The team should then discuss how to obtain the necessary resources. If funding is an issue, the team should consider how working with community and university partners may provide the necessary support. For example, actors may be drawn from local university medical, nursing, or social work programs. Some universities are willing to partner with agencies to provide program evaluators.

Plan for Actor and Participant Preparation

After the resources are in place for either a virtual or onsite simulation training, the team should write and deliver instructions for all participants in the simulation training, including the following, as appropriate:

- Trainees
- Actors
- Facilitators or trainers
- Observers
- Evaluators
- Training coordinator
- Any additional staff required to run the simulation

Instructions should include guidance for participation in the training, participation in debriefing or providing feedback, evaluation (if appropriate), and any additional follow-up. Participants should be told if the session is being recorded and when they will be able to review and discuss their performance with trainers or coaches. Participants may also receive feedback from simulation observers and actors—this process should be clearly described in the instructions.

For onsite training, the team should plan to work closely with actors, facilitators, and the training coordinator to ensure that they understand the following aspects of the simulation (Center for States, 2017):

- Learning objectives
- What will occur during the simulation
- Their roles in the simulation
- How much creativity or leeway actors will have in interpreting their roles, as well as any responsibilities they may have to provide feedback to the training participants

Create a Training Schedule

The next step in designing the simulation training is creating a training schedule. For the schedule, the team should consider how the simulation training fits in with the existing agency training schedule and plan appropriately. At this time, the team should appoint a training coordinator to be the person in charge on the day of the training.

It is important to consider how coaching during and after the simulation training can be used to help training participants refine the skills they have learned and reflect on how to apply them in the field.

Develop an Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan should contain approaches for formative evaluation (evaluation for the purpose of program improvement) and summative evaluation (evaluation for the purpose of judging the program's effectiveness). Some new programs may only have plans for formative evaluation, which is used for ongoing program development and refinement. Once implementation is complete and the training program is stable, the agency may then conduct a summative evaluation to assess outcomes. For more information on evaluating a program, see the Center's "Change and Implementation in Practice: Evaluating, Monitoring, and Applying Findings" brief.

4. Deliver Training

Before the day of the training, the training coordinator should arrange to prepare and inspect the training site to ensure that everything is ready.

- ◆ **For virtual simulation training**, this might include testing the equipment to see that it works properly and making sure there is adequate seating if the training is being conducted in a group setting.
- ◆ **For an onsite simulation**, the training coordinator should walk through the training site to make sure that everything is in place.

For both types of training, the coordinator should check in with all participants (perhaps by email) to ensure that everyone understands their roles and no one has questions.

On the day of the training, facilitators make sure everyone understands the simulation instructions, goals, and their own and others' roles. If the goal of training is to practice skills and develop competencies, participants might be encouraged to stop when they feel stuck and ask for assistance. This may lead to enhanced skill development and a more comprehensive understanding of the simulation scenario (Singer, 2018). Participants can sometimes get triggered by their own histories of abuse and neglect. Trainers, facilitators, participants, and other staff must watch for signs of this occurring and know if and when a simulation needs to be stopped (Goulet et al., 2020).

Because simulations provide an opportunity to give immediate feedback, coaching, support, and developmental guidance, proper debriefing of the simulation is paramount to the transfer of learning. Doing so incorrectly or inconsistently can be damaging to the individual and impact the integrity of the simulation experience. Willingness to support and dedication to intentional skill building are required to effectively facilitate simulations and conduct the debrief for participants (Goulet et al., 2020).

At the conclusion of an onsite training, as part of the debriefing, facilitators should encourage participants to reflect on the activity and identify their strengths and areas for growth. Sometimes, the actors who participated in the simulation may provide feedback to the participants. In some cases, observers of the training (participants in the audience) will provide feedback to simulation participants and, if appropriate, reflect on their own learning during the training. This process will allow trainees to practice giving and receiving feedback and begins to teach the practice of peer-to-peer support and coaching.

Participants' ability to view recordings of their own simulations is critical to their learning process. Viewing their simulations allows participants to pause and review the actual content of the interactions and connect it with the strength-based feedback and correctional guidance they received (Goulet et al., 2020).

Example From the Field:
Coaching and Active Learning During Simulation Training

Active learning is an important part of the simulation training program administered collaboratively by the Utah Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the University of Utah Social Research Institute. During the simulation, DCFS training staff and participants in the audience work with an "Audience Observation Form," an e-survey dashboard. Using tablets or smartphones, participants watching the simulation respond in real time to questions on the observation form about what they see on stage. At the end of each segment throughout the session, trainers integrate audience responses with their own observations to serve as the basis for discussion and a debrief about what they just saw (or what they did not see).

Part of this observation form includes a pre- and postassessment of participants' confidence in performing the tasks shown in the simulations. This increases the attention of the audience to what is going on in the simulation, even if they are not directly participating on stage. Additionally, it allows trainers to coach audience participants in skills and behaviors while simultaneously engaging with simulation participants. Finally, this method allows for large cohorts of participants where it is not logistically feasible to get every individual up on stage while still keeping all participants in a constant state of engagement and learning.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of taking place in an auditorium this simulation is conducted remotely from various sites across the state through a group meeting platform online, including the real-time e-surveys. This has enabled trainers to continue to understand how well audience participants recognize when the target behaviors are demonstrated by participants in the simulation.

5. Monitor, Evaluate, Improve, and Scale Up

After the simulation training program is up and running, the team should work with internal and external (if needed) staff to administer formative and summative evaluations according to the program evaluation plan. Formative evaluation may include collecting feedback from participants through surveys or focus groups. Results of the formative evaluation can be used to refine and improve the training, develop new training scenarios and vignettes, and scale up the program for use in other jurisdictions, with other staff, or for other types of simulation scenarios. Summative evaluation, which is administered later on, may go further than formative evaluation to use pretraining and posttraining tests or analyses of efficacy in applying new skills to actual case work. The summative evaluation can help the team decide if the program was successful in meeting its objectives and achieving desired outcomes and whether it should be continued, modified, or discontinued (Center for States, 2018b).

Example From the Field:
Simulation Training Program Evaluation

Building a plan for program evaluation into the earliest versions of a simulation training program can help inform improvements to the program as it is being developed and implemented and allow agencies to better understand the program's impact and see if it is meeting its goals. In February 2016, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) collaborated with a team from the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) to implement the Child Protection Training Academy, where child welfare staff participate in simulations of real-life situations that DCFS investigators encounter.

Beginning in 2016, the Children and Family Research Center (CFRC) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been evaluating the results of the simulation program by investigating such aspects as the impact of a new training model, change in participants' confidence in their own skills as a result of simulation training, participants' satisfaction with the training, and the impact of simulation training on employee turnover. The findings suggest that simulation training has significant benefits for child welfare workers (e.g., more confidence in testifying in court) as well as for agencies (e.g., lower worker turnover in the first 18 months working at a child welfare agency).

Evaluation reports on the CFRC website provide more details on investigation methodology and findings.

Source: Chiu & Cross, 2019

Conclusion

Simulation training programs—both onsite and virtual—provide opportunities for child welfare trainees and new and current workers to safely practice complex skills, build knowledge, and receive feedback on their performance that allows them to grow. Working together with universities, community partners, and families to develop a simulation training program at a child welfare agency can potentially translate into improved skills for the agency workforce and better engagement and interaction with children and families. The five steps outlined above can help guide trainers and their teams to develop, implement, and continually improve such programs in a deliberate fashion that reflects lessons learned from experienced programs.

> ⭐ **Example From the Field:**
> **Planning for the Future**
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> Moving into its fifth year, the Illinois Child Protection Training Academy has trained more than 750 new investigators and is an established part of training new investigators in Illinois (Goulet et al., 2020). In April 2019, the program has expanded to a second site in Chicago that also features a mock residence and courtroom (Goulet, et al., 2020). Recently the simulation training model was extended to help train supervisors and seasoned investigators who had not originally gone through the simulation training. In this training, participants work through a simulated supervisor-worker phone call to process scene investigation information and decide on what guidance to give the worker on the case.
>
> In the future, program leaders are considering the following changes and additions:
> ◆ Add additional time in the simulation training curriculum for practice and debrief and to potentially include more scenarios.
> ◆ Include a third training environment for more rural areas of the state.
> ◆ Build out the training to include non-child protection cases.
> ◆ Expand the simulation training to include all of DCFS intact, permanency and placement workers, as well as the private agency staff who are assigned intact cases and case workers.
> ◆ Offer simulation training at various points throughout a child welfare worker's career, not just at the beginning.
> ◆ Extend simulation training to families, caregivers, and youth.
> ◆ Offer cross-systems training to law enforcement, medical, education and other professionals who regularly work with child welfare systems.
> ◆ Use simulations to enhance classroom-based training. For example, the simulation lab can be used as a videotaping environment where the actors can present a vignette during a class and then have participants discuss it with them, opposed to just reading a vignette.

Keeping It Real Series Resources

You can find more information on the different types of simulation training programs, as well as tips and lessons learned from agencies that have implemented them, on the Keeping It Real series website. Resources include:

◆ **Keeping It Real series videos** illustrate what simulation training looks like and how it can be used to improve worker readiness for practice.

◆ "**Keeping It Real: How Simulation Training Can Support the Child Welfare Workforce**" discusses onsite and virtual simulation training, benefits, costs, and other considerations to help agencies decide if simulation training is right for them.

Additional Resources

The following resources can help agencies learn more about developing virtual and onsite simulation training programs.

Virtual Simulation Training

Capacity Building Center for States. (2018). Child welfare virtual expo 2018: Simulation innovation: It's not just role play anymore [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XK7HwJt00vs&feature=youtu.be

Child Welfare Information Gateway (Producer). (2019). *Episode 43: Virtual reality—the next stage of caseworker training* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/more-tools-resources/podcast/episode-43/

Davies, J. (2014). Maritime City: Using serious gaming to deliver child protection training. *Advances in Dual Diagnosis, 7*(1), 34–42. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1108/ADD-11-2013-0027

Reeves, J., Green, T., Marsden, L., & Shaw, M. (2018). myCourtroom: Rosie's family go to court; the use of simulations in preparing social workers for court. S*ocial Work Education, 37*(2), 234–249. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1391772

Reeves, J., Shemmings, D., Drew, I., & Ferguson, H. (2015). 'Rosie 2' A child protection simulation: Perspectives on neglect and the 'unconscious at work.' *Child Abuse Review, 24*(5). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273158986_'Rosie_2'_A_Child_Protection_Simulation_Perspectives_on_Neglect_and_the_'Unconscious_At_Work'

University of Utah College of Social Work. (2019). Changing the way child welfare workers learn. Retrieved from https://socialwork.utah.edu/publications/innovation-matters/2018/child-welfare-workers.php

Onsite Simulation Training

Chiu, Y. L. & Cross, T. (2018). Assessing an innovative method for training child protection investigators. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
Retrieved from https://cfrc.illinois.edu/pubs/bf_20180207_AssessinganInnovativeMethodforTrainingChildProtectionInvestigators:ProgramEvaluationoftheChildProtectionTrainingAcademy%E2%80%99sSimulationProgram.pdf

Goulet, B., Cross, T., Chiu, Y.L., & Evans, S. (2020). Moving from procedure to practice: A statewide child protection simulation training model. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1–20. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2020.1777247

Kourgiantakis, T., Bogo, M., & Sewell, K. M. (2019). Practice Fridays: Using simulation to develop holistic competence. *Journal of Social Work Education, 55*(3), 551–564. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2018.1548989

Leake, R., Holt, K., Potter, C., & Ortega, D. M. (2010). Using simulation training to improve culturally responsive child welfare practice. *Journal of Public Child Welfare, 4*(3), 325–346. Retrieved from http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/LatinoPracticeAdvisory/ORGANIZATIONAL_Workforce_development/Using%20simulation%20training.pdf

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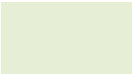
Appendix:
Illinois Simulation Training Schedule at a Glance

The following simulation training schedule is used at the Illinois Child Protection Training Academy, which is administered collaboratively by Illinois Division of Child and Family Services and the University of Illinois at Springfield. When used together with the videos on the Keeping it Real website, this sample schedule can help training directors and teams better understand the structure and pacing of one state's simulation training program.

Illinois's child welfare simulation training usually takes place in Springfield, IL in the last week of training for all new child protection investigators. The class starts out in a traditional classroom format for the first few weeks, where participants learn the policies and procedures they will need for their work. **A week of simulation training follows that allows 10 to 12 participants at a time to practice the skills they will need to use in the first 48 hours of a single case.**

It is important to note that the sample simulation training schedule below is provided as an example only and not meant to be used as guidance for all simulation training programs.

The color-coded "building blocks" below can help visualize how the Illinois simulation training team combine different components of a week of training in a sample simulation training schedule.

Orientation for Simulation: These activities introduce trainees to each other and help prepare them for upcoming simulations and debriefs.

Simulation Scenarios: During these activities, trainees either participate in or observe child welfare simulation scenarios (7 to 8 minutes per participant).

Individual Debriefs: These activities occur during and after a simulation or a set of simulations. Simulation facilitators and trainers answer trainees questions, discuss the simulation experience with the participants in one-on-one conversations (around 5 minutes per participant).

Overall Debrief: These activities occur after the simulations are completed for the day. These are conversations among simulation facilitators and coaches and simulation participants in which participants reflect on their learning, receive feedback and reflect on strengths and areas for growth, and plan what they need to do the next day.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Classroom Training	Introduction	Knock on the Door	Scene Investigation	Parent Interviews	Prehearing Meeting With Parents	**Beginning Work in the Field**
	Collateral Calls	Interspersed With Individual Debriefs	Interspersed With Individual Debriefs	Court Prep Training	Court Simulation	
	Overall Debrief	Overall Debrief	Supervision	Overall Debrief	Overall Debrief	
			Overall Debrief			

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