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FY2020 Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators

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June 2020

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Executive Summary

Since the Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA) launched the first simulation training at University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) in February 2016, the CPTA has trained hundreds of new child protection investigators hired by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Trainees receive first-hand experience learning a wide range of child protection tasks, from the first knock on a family's door to testifying in family court, guided by expert trainers and working with actors playing the family in a mock house and mock courtroom. In FY2020, the Children and Family Research Center's (CFRC) evaluation team again used multiple substudies to examine the implementation and outcomes of simulation training. This is an important time in the program's history, when simulation training has been expanded to include a new training laboratory in Chicago.

Chapter 1: Implementation Evaluation of the Chicago Simulation Laboratory

Chapter 1 uses qualitative data to assess the implementation of a second simulation laboratory for new investigators that opened in Chicago in April 2019. Since that date, new investigators can receive their simulation training in either Springfield or Chicago. To gather data for the implementation evaluation, the evaluation team used the following methods: 1) observation of training in the Chicago laboratory; 2) interviews with key stakeholders involved in implementing the Chicago laboratory, including program administrators, trainers, actors, and courtroom professionals participating in the simulations; and 3) review of relevant documents, including the training curriculum and manual, a lessons learned document written by the UIS team, trainee assessment tools, and problem-based learning (PBL) materials. The evaluators recruited 24 participants for the stakeholder interviews and 17 participated (including DCFS workforce staff, UIS simulation training program staff, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) workforce development administrative staff, Chicago laboratory training staff, Classroom trainers, DCFS legal team professionals, and actors), yielding a participation rate of 70%.

Section 1.1 describes the development of the Chicago simulation training laboratory. In 2018, DCFS decided to establish the Chicago laboratory rapidly because of the uncertainties connected to the possible change in political administrations in Illinois following the gubernatorial election in November 2018. The urgency required various stakeholders to move quickly and some noted that it felt rushed.

DCFS decided to locate the simulation laboratory in existing DCFS office space in Chicago. Contractors were hired to knock down walls and make other physical changes to reconfigure the office space into space suitable for simulations, guided by UIS's experience. The UIS team made numerous trips to Chicago to consult on the construction of the laboratory space.

To develop the Chicago laboratory program, the organizational partners worked to recruit and train actors, courtroom professionals, and the Chicago laboratory staff. UIS traveled to Chicago to train simulation facilitators, train the actors hired to work in the Chicago simulations, and prepare the DCFS legal team for the courtroom simulation. In addition, UIS developed a training manual and other training materials and training assessment metrics, and provided a lessons learned document. DCFS and UIUC decided to engage professional actors to play the role of

family members in the Chicago simulations and worked with a talent agency to hire them. The Chicago laboratory used a legal team from DCFS in the courtroom simulation. Staff were hired for three positions in Chicago. To prepare, the three new staff studied material on child protection; passed the child protection certificate examination; participated in, observed, and reviewed video recordings of simulations; and co-facilitated simulations with UIS trainers. UIS invested considerable time in supporting the onboarding and in debriefing the new staff. Some interviewees felt the onboarding process was rushed and needed to be clearer and better developed, and other interviewees felt there were no clear rubrics for assessing new facilitators' readiness

Section 1.2 explores how the three key players, simulation facilitators, the actors, and courtroom professionals, have implemented simulation training to provide effective learning experiences to trainees. UIS trainers ran simulation training in Chicago until simulation facilitators could be hired, onboarded, and trained; the new facilitators began to train independently in October 2019. Facilitators were trained in a variety of skills needed to implement simulation training successfully, such as coaching, debriefing, modeling investigation skills, and problem-based learning techniques. Actors learned characters' back-stories from profiles provided by the program, sometimes learning different roles to play at different times. Actors valued simulation facilitators preparing them through emotional check-ins, information about the simulations, tips about the characters, and instruction in giving strength-based feedback to trainees. Attorneys playing the courtroom professionals developed questions themselves for the court simulations, as they would in real life. The program is considering ways to provide more experience to trainees with both direct examination and cross-examination from attorneys in different roles.

Section 1.3 explores the differences between the Springfield and Chicago laboratories. UIS uses a house on campus for simulation training; trainees in Springfield are required to drive to the house to participate in simulations. The Chicago laboratory, on the other hand, uses an apartment setting inside a DCFS office building, down the hall from the classroom. In Springfield, individuals from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Standardized Patient Program play the roles of family members in simulations, while professional actors play the roles in the Chicago laboratory. In Springfield, current and retired juvenile court judges and procurators play the role of courtroom professionals, while, in Chicago, the DCFS legal team play these roles.

The sum total of the similarities and dissimilarities suggests that the Chicago laboratory is a modest re-invention of the Springfield laboratory, using Rogers'¹ terminology on diffusion of innovations. The combined work of DCFS, UIUC and UIS aimed at producing programs that were comparable clearly had an effect, and the extra work and travel of UIS trainers to help make this happen are noteworthy. The experience with the Chicago laboratory suggests that expansion can be successful while still needing to deal with challenges to maintaining the capacity and quality of the simulation training program. A collaborative effort among all the partner organizations and attention and resources devoted to expanding the availability of

¹ Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th Ed.). New York: Free Press

skilled facilitators and trainers holds promise for using simulations broadly to enhance the effectiveness of training at DCFS.

Chapter 2: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)

Chapter 2 presents results from FY2020 from the Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) measure. The DEST is an ongoing component of the simulation training program for new investigators and was designed to examine trainees' experience of change over the course of simulation training. During the week of simulation training, trainees rated their confidence daily on a scale of thirteen child protection work skills. The DEST is implemented at 6 time points over the course of simulation training week: Monday morning (baseline), and then at the end of each day, Monday through Friday.

Between May 1, 2019, and March 6, 2020, a total of 149 trainees participated in the simulation training. The DEST data included 750 responses from 148 respondents who filled out the DEST at one time point or more. The weighted average daily response rate was 84%.

Trainees rated their confidence level from 1 (low) to 7 (high) on 13 items representing different skills. Confidence levels at baseline (Monday morning) ranged from an average of 4.3 (work as a DCFS investigator) to an average of 4.9 (engage families). Confidence levels on the last day ranged between an average of 5.9 and an average of 6.0. Oneway analyses of variance (ANOVA) with linear contrasts were statistically significant for all 13 confidence items, indicating that there was a significant linear increase in confidence over the course of the simulation training week. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with the 70 respondents who completed the DEST at every time point. Differences across time points were statistically significant for all 13 items and the results showed a linear increase each day during the simulation training week. The effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) for both the entire sample ($n=148$) and the repeated measure sample ($n=70$) show very large increases in confidence. We examined DEST results by training cohort from May 2019 to March 2020; trainings in Springfield and Chicago were both represented. The results consistently showed improvements in confidence in most cohorts. There was one cohort with only a small increase in confidence.

The DEST also asked participants to rate the helpfulness of trainers' and actors' feedback. The majority of respondents found the feedback very helpful or helpful, with no difference in the helpfulness of feedback across roles. At the end of the daily DEST survey, an open-ended question was asked: "What were the most meaningful concepts or skills you learned today?" Most trainees reported that they had learned the skills taught that day, and a number reported that they had learned about their own behavior from feedback from others, that they developed greater self-awareness, and that their confidence increased. Trainees also used the DEST to offer suggestions for the program; for example, two trainees suggested having the opportunity to do simulations with African-Americans playing the role of the family.

As in previous years, the DEST in FY2020 shows that the confidence that trainees report increased substantially from the beginning to the end of the simulation training week. The DEST analysis by cohort suggests that the increase in confidence measured by the DEST was very consistent across cohorts—the one cohort that was an exception suggests increases in confidence are not guaranteed, so quality control is important. The open-ended question

indicates that most trainees felt they were learning the skills being taught, and many reported benefitting from feedback and increased confidence.

The limitation of the DEST is that it measures trainees' subjective sense of their abilities, and is not an objective measure of their skills. Nevertheless, DEST results are important because trainees' appraisal of their skills is likely to have some validity and training is unlikely to be effective if trainees do not believe that their skills are increasing.

Chapter 3: Post-Training Satisfaction Survey

Chapter 3 offers new quantitative results from the post-training satisfaction survey that all new investigators are invited to complete following their Certification Training. DCFS administers this survey. For this year's evaluation, DCFS provided an updated data set that included survey responses from February 2019 to February 2020.

There were 92 survey respondents between February 2019 and February 2020. On a 5-point scale (strongly disagree=1; disagree=2; undecided=3; agree=4; strongly agree=5), the mean of the eight questions about simulation training ranged from 4.0 (I felt prepared to participate in the SIM lab) to 4.6 (I felt respected during my debriefing). We compared mean scores on the eight items using a repeated measures analysis of variance, which was statistically significant. Trainees' ratings on feeling prepared for simulation training were significantly lower on average than all their other satisfaction ratings. There were no significant differences between other satisfaction items, all of which were in the range between agree and strongly agree on average.

We compared mean satisfaction ratings for the current fiscal year to mean satisfaction ratings from previous fiscal years. The mean satisfaction ratings for FY2020 were comparable to those from the most recent previous fiscal years. As has been apparent for several years, satisfaction scores in recent years have not reached the extremely high levels they achieved in the first two years of the programs.

Results from the post-training survey corroborate the satisfaction that trainees reported on the DEST. Across eight satisfaction items, trainees gave simulation training positive to very positive ratings. The significantly lower rating for feeling prepared for simulation training deserves attention. Simulation training is markedly different from the classroom training that precedes it. It is more emotionally demanding and places performance demands on trainees.

Nevertheless, it is possible that trainees' classroom preparation for simulation training was inconsistent, leading some trainees to feel less prepared to begin simulation training. The simulation training team has made efforts to help integrate classroom training and simulation training by developing a "life of the case" approach that tries to engage trainees in critical thinking about hypothetical case that is carried over into simulation training. Trainers are considering having simulation facilitators introduce themselves to the trainees in the classroom before the simulation training week, and plan to initiate meetings between classroom trainers and simulation facilitators.

Chapter 4: Post-Training Satisfaction Survey: Content Analysis of Open-ended Responses

Chapter 4 presents a content analysis of open-ended responses on the post-training satisfaction survey from February 2016 to April 2019, in which trainees write text to describe their simulation training experience and offer suggestions for program improvement.

The analysis looked at text responses to the two open-ended items on the post-training satisfaction survey: 1) “Comment on this experience” and 2) “Please add a few statements that summarize your experiences in the Simulation Labs to help us improve the scenarios.” We analyzed text responses of 195 trainees who provided comments in response to the first item. Survey responses could largely be categorized into three groups: positive (57.4%), positive with suggestions for improvement (28.2%), and negative (10.3%). The miscellaneous group (4.1%) included those who commented only on the classroom portion of the training or had mixed feelings about the simulation training (e.g., “I felt it was very real, but a little over the top”). We analyzed text responses of 317 trainees who provided comments on the second item regarding how to improve the simulation scenarios. The majority (98.1%) of the trainees who responded to this item indicated that the experience was positive, with many trainees providing specific recommendations on how the training could improve. More than half of the trainees in this group felt they could have used more time in the simulation training while other trainees had recommendations in the following categories: scenarios (12.6%), instruction (8.4%), acting (8.4%), feedback (4.7%), documentation (3.2%), court (3.2%), logistics (2.1%), and miscellaneous (3.7%). DCFS also provided updated data that included survey responses from February 2019 and February 2020. The results from the updated content analysis were similar to the findings mentioned above.

Just as we saw with the DEST ratings and comments and the post-training satisfaction scores, trainees completing the open-ended items on the post-training survey provided very positive feedback for the simulation training program. They reported that the training provided realistic simulation and increased their knowledge about what they will face in the field. They described positive emotional effects on increasing confidence and decreasing self-doubt. However, the program needs to be aware of the small percentage of trainees who have a negative experience.

Chapter 5: Report Conclusion and Recommendations

The simulation training program underwent a significant transition in FY2020. The new Chicago laboratory had just opened in Spring 2019, and the program devoted considerable attention to developing the Chicago program, and to hiring and training new facilitators for Chicago. Despite all this transition, the news on simulation training remains positive. On the multiple indices measured in this program evaluation, simulation training continued to receive very positive feedback. Trainees value simulation training highly and report increases in their skills as a result of the training. This has been a consistent finding throughout the history of the program. Another consistent finding is that trainees continue to want more simulation training, both more time devoted to doing simulation and wider application of the program.

As this report illustrates, to maintain its quality, the simulation training program has needed to address a number of challenges. Moreover, we anticipate that the program will continue to evolve to meet the needs of trainees. We end the report with several recommendations: 1) to enhance the hiring, onboarding, and training of new facilitators; and invest in the development

of facilitators into trainers; 2) to consider varying the race of actors even within the Chicago and Springfield sites, and explore ways to address racial assumptions and biases in child protection investigation; 3) to enhance the preparedness of trainees for simulation; and 4) to learn more about trainees who have a negative experience of the program and tabulate how many graduates do not continue in child protection.

The simulation training program enjoys considerable support from trainees and stakeholders and is expanding rapidly. Program evaluation data have contributed to the program's growth and can help shape and improve the future development of the program. The demand for more simulation training and the need to address a wide variety of training needs in an environment challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic and social ills will challenge the simulation training program. The simulation training program and the three partners collaborating have an opportunity to adapt to new demands and increase the promise of simulation training.

Introduction

Since the Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA) launched the first simulation training at University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) in February 2016, the CPTA has trained hundreds of new child protection investigators hired by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Trainees receive first-hand experience learning a wide range of child protection tasks, from the first knock on a family's door to testifying in family court, guided by expert trainers and working with actors playing the family in a mock house and mock courtroom. As we discuss below, the program has received very positive feedback from trainees, both during and after training, and up to two years later when program alumni working as investigators were surveyed. Program evaluation has also found that turnover of new investigators has diminished since simulation training began, although it is difficult to attribute this to simulation training versus other historical trends that may have affected simulation training. The current report provides results on implementation and outcomes of simulation training from FY2020. This is an important time in the program's history, when simulation training was expanded to include a new training laboratory in Chicago.

An Overview of Previous Program Evaluation Results

The FY2017 evaluation² used qualitative methods (observation and interviews) to describe the development of the CPTA and develop a logic model for the program. It also analyzed data from a post-training satisfaction survey (N=154) of program graduates. Respondents were asked a series of questions about whether simulation training had been effective. On every item except "feeling prepared for simulation training," 76% to 84% of respondents strongly agreed. Across seven evaluative questions on simulation training, there were 1,052 positive ratings (99.3%) and only 7 negative ratings (0.7%). Content analysis of open-ended survey items showed that trainees frequently volunteered positive comments on the value of simulation training. Survey respondents recommended extending simulation training to a wider range of topics, professionals, and locations.

The FY2018 evaluation³ included a qualitative component that examined in greater depth the process of developing the training. Interviews and focus groups with 32 stakeholders pointed to how the abilities of the CPTA team drive simulation training. The simulation trainer had a blend of numerous skills that facilitated simulation training. The standardized patients combined an ability to stay in character and provide feedback with an effective partnership with the simulation trainer. Legal professionals in the courtroom roles were motivated to help DCFS

² Cross, T. P., Tittle, G., & Chiu, Y. (2018). Program Evaluation of Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators: Initial Report. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
https://www.cfr Illinois.edu/pubs/rp_20180131_ProgramEvaluationofChildProtectionTrainingAcademyforNewDCFSInvestigators:InitialReport.pdf

³ Cross, T. P. & Chiu, Y. (2018). FY2018 Program Evaluation of Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
https://www.cfr Illinois.edu/pubs/rp_20181016_FY2018ProgramEvaluationoftheChildProtectionTrainingAcademyforNewDCFSInvestigators.pdf

workers improve their skills and emphasized collecting the necessary information, communicating information clearly and accurately, and presenting in a professional manner.

In addition, the FY2018 evaluation surveyed 259 current DCFS investigators; about half of those had received simulation training (sim group) and half had not, because they were hired before simulation training was offered (pre-sim group). The sim group reported greater ease in acquiring the skills of evidence-based documentation and testifying in court. Sim-trained investigators also valued the contribution of different simulations to preparing them for their job. The survey also found differences between sim-trained and pre-sim trained investigators on their thoughts about leaving their job. Pre-sim investigators had four times greater odds of reporting that they were actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS. Pre-sim investigators also had more than three times greater odds of reporting that they would leave DCFS as soon as they found another job, once age and experience were statistically controlled.

The FY2019 evaluation⁴ included multiple substudies to examine the implementation and outcomes of simulation training. The CPTA made significant changes to their training model and implemented it on August 20, 2018, and the program evaluation team conducted a qualitative study of the new training model. The evaluation team also implemented a method called the Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) to examine trainees' experience of change over the course of the simulation training week. The analyses indicated that trainees' confidence level for 13 skills significantly increased over the course of simulation training week. Confidence levels were measured on a 7-point scale, with 7 representing maximum confidence. Confidence levels on the last day ranged from an average of 5.7 (work as a DCFS investigator, testify in court) to an average of 5.9 (engage families, assess safety, integrate compassion and investigative skill). Effect size statistics indicate that the increases were large for every confidence item. The program evaluation team also conducted an updated analysis of the post-training satisfaction data. DCFS provided the evaluation team with data from the post training survey between February 2016 and April 2019. Although the ratings of simulation training were consistently positive across the past 4 years, the ratings of simulation training decreased somewhat from FY2016 to in FY2019. On the other hand, the mean satisfaction score for simulation training was higher than the mean for classroom training by one-fifth of a point on the 5-point scale, a difference that was small but statistically significant.

Employee turnover has historically been a problem in child welfare and the quality of training may be one important way of addressing turnover. Using employment data from DCFS Division of Budget and Finance, the evaluation team examined whether DCFS investigators who had received simulation training tend to remain in their jobs longer than DCFS investigators who joined DCFS before simulation training was available and did not receive simulation training. Results using the statistical method of survival analysis indicated that investigators in the pre-sim group were significantly more likely to leave their job than those in the sim group in their first two years. At Month 18, 37% of pre-sim group had left their job compared to 20% of sim

⁴ Chiu, Y. & Cross, T. P. (2019). FY2019 Program Evaluation of Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. https://www.cfric.illinois.edu/pubs/rp_20190903_FY2019ProgramEvaluationoftheChildProtectionTrainin gAcademyforNewDCFSInvestigators.pdf

group. At Month 23, the turnover rates for the two groups almost converge. The odds of leaving their job for the pre-sim group were 1.8 times greater than the odds of leaving for the sim group, after controlling for other variables. The reduction in turnover during investigators' first two years could reflect the impact of simulation training. The caveat, however, is that the simulation training "era" at DCFS could differ in many ways from the era before simulation training began, so there could be other explanations for differences between non-sim trained investigators (hired before February 2016) and sim-trained investigators (hired after February 2016).

Program Evaluation Activities in FY2020

In FY2020, the CFRC evaluation team again used multiple substudies to examine the implementation and outcomes of simulation training. The first substudy (Chapter 1) focuses on the implementation of a second simulation laboratory for new investigators that opened in Chicago in April 2019. Since that date, new investigators can receive their simulation training in either Springfield or Chicago. An important component of evaluation of an expansion of a program is an evaluation of program implementation. Evaluation of how an expansion has been implemented can help guide future program expansion and can also assist with interpretation of data on impact. The implementation evaluation of the Chicago simulation laboratory assesses whether the program was implemented as planned, what has been achieved in implementation, what challenges have been encountered and dealt with, and how implementation achievements and challenges may influence the impact of the program. Implementation evaluation is primarily qualitative.

Chapter 2 presents results from FY2020 from the Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) measure. The DEST is an ongoing component of the simulation training program for new investigators and CFRC periodically analyzes DEST data to track changes in trainees' confidence over the course of the one-week training. Analyzing the DEST for different cohorts helps assess whether the effects of simulation training on trainees' confidence is being maintained and is consistent across cohorts.

Chapter 3 offers new quantitative results from the post-training satisfaction survey that all new investigators are invited to complete following their Certification Training. The analysis looks at data from February 2019 to February 2020 to assess new investigators' appraisal of the training, and compares these results to those of previous years. Chapter 4 presents a content analysis of open-ended responses on the post-training satisfaction survey, in which trainees write text to describe their simulation training experience and offer suggestions for program improvement. Chapter 5 considers all the program evaluation results and discusses the implications for understanding and developing the simulation training program.

Chapter 1: Implementation Evaluation of the Chicago Simulation Laboratory

In 2018, DCFS' Office of Learning & Professional Development sought to expand simulation training to a new laboratory in Chicago. This would improve geographical access for many new investigators, the majority of whom are from Cook County or DCFS' Northern region. A second site would also enhance the overall capacity for simulation training, facilitating expansion of simulation training to other professionals at DCFS. The replication of the model in Chicago was written into the UIS FY 2019 program plan. Later DCFS granted the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) a contract to develop the Chicago simulation laboratory, and the laboratory was launched in April 2019. A Workforce Development team at UIUC oversees the Chicago laboratory. This chapter presents the results of a qualitative evaluation of the implementation of simulation training in the new Chicago site. Understanding this first ever replication of the model for training new DCFS investigators can inform DCFS' efforts to expand simulation training. This is particularly relevant now that UIS is replicating the simulation training model in the Southern region of Illinois and a contract to create a simulation laboratory in the Northern region for DCFS training has been awarded to Northern Illinois University. The evaluation aims to describe the process by which simulation training was replicated in a new location and explore the implications for the further development of the program.

Methods

To gather data for the implementation evaluation, the evaluation team used the following methods: 1) observation of training in the Chicago laboratory; 2) interviews with key stakeholders involved in implementing the Chicago laboratory, including program administrators, trainers, actors, and courtroom professionals participating in the simulations; and 3) review of relevant documents, including the training curriculum and manual, a lessons learned document written by the UIS team, trainee assessment tools, and problem-based learning (PBL) materials.

Observation of the Training in the Chicago Laboratory

Dr. Yu-Ling Chiu conducted an observation of simulation training during the week-long training beginning September 30, 2019. That was the first week in which the two new simulation facilitators⁵ in the Chicago laboratory co-facilitated the simulation training with the UIS trainer. Dr. Chiu reviewed the most updated simulation training manual (2019 edition)⁶ before conducting the observation. The manual was one of the primary tools for assessing the fidelity of the simulation training at the Chicago site, especially the daily activities. Those individuals observed included three Chicago training staff, the UIS trainer, the cohort's classroom trainer (who assisted with simulation training), and the cohort of six trainees. Dr. Chiu recorded field notes daily during the week of observation and analyzed them in conjunction with the analysis of interview transcripts (see below).

⁵ "Facilitator" is a term used in the simulation training referring to trainers who provide simulation training. In this chapter, facilitator and trainer will be used interchangeably.

⁶ Child Protection Training Academy (2019). *Simulation Manual*. University of Illinois Springfield.

Key Informant Interviews

We also used key informant interviews to gather data on implementation. DCFS, UIUC, and UIS provided contact information for professionals involved in the Chicago laboratory implementation. The evaluators recruited 24 participants on the contact list via emails or phone calls and 17 participated, yielding a participation rate of 70%. Table 1 shows the distribution of key informants recruited and interviewed by informant role. Note that classroom trainers were included because they attended simulation training and contributed to debriefing the trainees. The actors were paid their hourly rate for their interviews per DCFS' contract with the actors' talent agency. Originally, the program evaluators planned to interview trainees who completed the simulation training. However, we were not able to seek and obtain approval from the DCFS workers' union in time to conduct these interviews.

Table 1 Number of Key Informant Interviews by Role

	Number Recruited	Number Participated
DCFS Workforce staff	3	2
UIS simulation training program staff	3	3
UIUC Workforce Development administrative staff	2	2
Chicago laboratory training staff	3	2
Classroom trainers	6	2
DCFS Legal Team professionals	4	3
Actors	3	3
Total	24	17

The interview protocols were semi-structured and shared the same research questions, with minor differences tailored to interviewee role (see Appendix A for the text of the interview protocols). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Two evaluators reviewed the transcripts and coded them independently, following Braun and Clarke's method.⁷ All three evaluators reviewed a master file of coding and the observation field notes and agreed on themes they identified in the text. The implementation evaluation was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Results

1.1 The Development of the Chicago Simulation Training Laboratory

In 2018, DCFS decided to move quickly to establish the Chicago laboratory because of the uncertainties connected to the possible change in political administrations in Illinois following the gubernatorial election in November 2018. As several interviewees noted, the urgency required various stakeholders to move quickly and some noted that it felt rushed. To develop

⁷ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101.

the Chicago laboratory, DCFS worked closely with the Workforce Development Team hired by UIUC,⁸ as well as staff from UIS.

UIS had already been training future trainers months before the Chicago laboratory contract was granted, in order to increase training capacity in anticipation of plans to expand simulation training. Trainers who previously had been limited to classroom training were learning how to assist with simulation training. These individuals were then able to assist with implementation of simulation training at the Chicago site.

An important early decision concerned the physical location of the Chicago laboratory. Per a proposal from a consultant, the UIUC Workforce Development Team and DCFS decided to locate the simulation laboratory in existing DCFS office space in Chicago. This was a cost-effective decision that led to a training environment that differed in some key ways from the Springfield environment. Contractors were hired to knock down walls and make other physical changes to reconfigure the office space into space suitable for simulations, guided by UIS's experience. The UIS team made numerous trips to Chicago to review the progress of construction and consulted on such matters as square footage, content for each simulation space, and technology needs.

The Chicago laboratory has two mock apartments, one mock courtroom, and one mock medical emergency room. The layout of the mock apartments looks like an apartment in the nearby North side of Chicago, which creates a realistic scenario for the investigators from that city. Simulation training for newly hired investigators currently uses one of the two mock apartments, which includes most of the same environmental hazards as the mock house in Springfield. The other mock apartment is not outfitted with environmental hazards, and will be used in the future for different purposes (see below).

Because of their need to move quickly, DCFS and its partner launched simulation training in Chicago in April 2019, before dedicated staff were hired for the Chicago laboratory. UIS continued to train classroom trainers, trained the actors hired to work in the Chicago simulations, and prepared the DCFS legal team (see below) for the courtroom simulation. UIUC hired staff for the Chicago site from funds provided by DCFS. In addition, UIS developed related training materials and training assessment metrics, and provided a lessons learned document based on their experiences and evaluation findings of the past three years.⁹ UIS made recommendations, for example, about the number of staff needed to conduct simulation training, the need to train actors, how to debrief trainees, and other aspects of the training process.

In DCFS' vision, the three entities (UIS, UIUC and DCFS) would work as a team under its leadership. DCFS staff saw developing the training curriculum for the Chicago laboratory as part of UIS's contractual obligation. UIS trainers trained DCFS and UIUC staff and ran the training in Chicago for more than six months. However, UIS had no supervisory authority over other

⁸ It should be noted that both the program evaluation team that wrote this report and the workforce development team are based in the UIUC School of Social Work, but in separate units.

⁹ Child Protection Training Academy (2018). *Lessons Learned: Simulation Training 2016 – 2018*. Springfield, IL; University of Illinois at Springfield.

trainers. Some interviewees felt it became unclear who was accountable for the performance of different trainers. Several interviewees raised a concern about the training of trainers (ToT) process, since they felt that UIS did not provide clear assessment rubrics for trainers' readiness for facilitating simulation trainings.

Recruitment and Training of Actors

DCFS and UIUC decided to engage professional actors to play the role of family members in the Chicago simulations (see below discussion on the difference between using standardized patients and using professional actors). UIUC worked with a talent agency in Chicago to hire non-unionized actors. Non-unionized actors were chosen because finalizing the contract with Screen Actors Guild workers would have taken considerable time to complete, which would have been a challenge given the urgency that DCFS felt in starting the training. Yet, DCFS still worked on the contract with the Screen Actors Guild for workers for future hiring. Agents communicated the opportunity to their actor clients, and several calls were held in which actors auditioned in front of a panel of staff from DCFS, UIS, and UIUC. Thirty actors were approved through the process. The pool of actors was racially and ethnically diverse; some were bilingual.

UIUC then brought the actors in for an orientation training with UIS staff. The orientation started with an overview of DCFS services, instruction on the nature of child protection investigations, and description of the simulation training program. The actors were given detailed profiles of the three characters in the Rhodes/Jones case. They also received education about the underlying conditions of mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. UIS trainers provided guidance on how the characters should be portrayed as well as how the acting should reflect the underlying conditions. When they did a "walk-through" of the mock apartment, the actors got to see where safety hazards were. They also learned how to interact with trainees and how to reply to potential questions during simulation encounters.

UIUC has been very satisfied with the partnership with the talent agency. The agency takes care of all the scheduling with actors, which went well even during the Chicago laboratory's busiest month. Once, when UIUC reported that an actor did not act professionally, the talent agency removed the actor from the list and replaced with that person with another eligible actor.

Recruitment and Preparation of Courtroom Professionals

The Chicago laboratory used a legal team from DCFS in the courtroom simulation. Due to the nature of their work in representing and supporting DCFS workers in juvenile court, doing the courtroom simulation training for newly hired investigators is "right along in line with their everyday work and the required skills that are necessary for them," as one interviewee said. The deputy of the legal team selected the supervisory regional counsels statewide to participate in the simulation training program. Selection was based on individuals' experiences in the juvenile court and knowledge of DCFS procedures and the Juvenile Court Act. All the professionals we interviewed had years of experience in juvenile court. This experience was important; one interviewee noted that the juvenile court has become "an area of specialty," different from other divisions. Attorneys with juvenile court experience know, for example, that hearsay is admissible in a temporary custody or shelter hearing, though it is typically not admissible in criminal court. The attorneys participating in simulation trainings have worked

with different judges in juvenile court, providing them knowledge about how to play the part of a judge in the mock courtroom.

The attorneys had a one-day orientation in the Chicago laboratory. The UIS trainers introduced the simulation program to them, provided a tour of the mock apartment and courtroom, and gave them the court report on the case to be simulated. The attorneys watched videos of the courtroom simulation in Springfield, and UIS trainers prepared them on giving positive and constructive feedback to participants during debriefing. DCFS' training department worked directly with the deputy of the legal team to schedule the available attorneys. However, sometimes no attorneys are available for a given simulation. Thus DCFS plans to recruit more members from the legal team.

Recruitment and On-Boarding of the Chicago Laboratory Staff

Staff were hired for three positions in Chicago: associate director, lead facilitator, and facilitator. The job descriptions were based on job descriptions already in use at UIS, but were adjusted somewhat to match the job description of other trainers working for UIUC. DCFS, UIUC, and UIS staff all served on the search committee. UIS provided simulation training videos as an interview tool. All candidates for the three positions had to review the videos and demonstrate their coaching ability by simulating coaching in response to the videos during the job interviews. The two facilitators were evaluated based on their experience in child welfare, their coaching and facilitation skills demonstrated in the mock coaching, and their response to other interview questions.

UIS took the lead on developing the onboarding plans for the Chicago staff, with input from DCFS. The UIS simulation training program director spent a considerable amount of time through daily phone calls and emails with the associate director of Chicago laboratory in order to support her onboarding. The three new staff did the following to prepare: 1) study material on child protection investigations and pass the child protection certificate examination (see below); 2) participate in simulation training provided by UIS trainers as well as an additional problem-based learning (PBL) provided through UIS's participation in Project FORECAST,¹⁰ 3) observe additional simulation trainings in Chicago and Springfield; 4) review video recordings of simulations; 5) co-facilitate the simulation with UIS trainers. This preparation preceded them leading simulation training for the first time by themselves.

The two new Chicago facilitators did not have prior direct experience in child protection work. Therefore, UIS originally suggested that the two facilitators complete the child protection foundation training, the same training that new investigators have to complete. However, time was limited, given the schedule for turning over training in Chicago to the new facilitators. Thus UIUC chose instead to require the new trainers to pass the child protection certificate exam required of new investigators, instead of attending the training. Before participating in any simulation training, the new facilitators had to review DCFS policy (e.g. Procedures 300), foundation training curricula (for investigators, intact workers and placement workers), and the simulation training manual.

¹⁰ University of Missouri at St. Louis Children's Advocacy Center (2020). CASGSL Research. St. Louis: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.stlouisCAC.org/Programs%20and%20Services/casgsl-research.html>

The UIS trainers coached and supported the new facilitators to help them learn a number of new skills. One important new skill was using the PBL training method. PBL presents trainees with problems to solve rather than content to memorize. The training teaches new investigators to use active efforts to gain the knowledge they need to do problem-solving. The new facilitators also had to learn how to do individual debriefing with trainees and how to facilitate a group debriefing in the classroom based on the PBL framework.

The UIS trainers also did individual and group debriefing with the Chicago facilitators each day after trainees were dismissed. In addition, the new staff took the initiative to enhance their own learning. The new associate director requested and reviewed over 700 video files of past UIS simulation training with the new facilitators so they could study the simulation training process and facilitation techniques. They also did role plays among themselves and coached one another in order to improve their training skills.

Interviewees mentioned some challenges in the onboarding process. Some felt that the onboarding process for the new facilitators was rushed, and that this detracted from the onboarding experience. A few interviewees felt that the onboarding plan needed to be clearer and better developed. Immersing the new facilitators in the process required considerable in-person time from UIS.

Other interviewees felt that there were no clear rubrics for assessing new facilitators' readiness. They pointed to a lack of consensus among DCFS, UIS, and UIUC about the rubrics for evaluating facilitators. Several interviewees felt that an objective tool is needed so that everyone could understand whether a fledgling simulation trainer or facilitator was ready to train independently, and why or why not. This would promote greater consensus on decisions regarding new simulation facilitators.

1.2 Implementation of the Chicago Simulation Training Laboratory

Simulation training for child protection has three key players who must all function well together for the training to provide effective experiential learning: simulation facilitators, actors, and courtroom professionals. This section explores these roles using data from the interviews.

Simulation Facilitators

Between the April 2019 launch of the Chicago laboratory and October 2019, UIS trainers ran simulation training in Chicago, assisted by classroom trainers from both DCFS and UIUC. UIS staff divided their time between Chicago and Springfield, where trainings also continued. UIS assisted with hiring dedicated Chicago staff in July 2019, trained and helped onboard the new Chicago trainers. UIS continued to run simulation training with help from the new staff until the new staff were ready in late October to run simulation training without assistance.

UIS has developed a detailed training manual¹¹ for all trainers and facilitators in simulation training. The manual contains the daily plan of simulation training and instruction for the facilitators. It includes the instructional aims for each exercise, what skills each exercise supports, suggested language for explaining each exercise, guidance on how to facilitate PBL,

¹¹ Child Protection Training Academy (2019). *Simulation Manual*. University of Illinois Springfield.

teaching points, and so forth. Interviewees familiar with the training of new facilitators thought that it was essential for them to fully understand the purpose and design of simulation training and be familiar with every step and every tool in order to carry on an effective simulation training.

Facilitating learning and building competence

To facilitate trainees' learning and build their competence, simulation facilitators need to be able to develop training skills such as coaching, modeling investigation skills during the individual debriefing, and facilitating PBL techniques during the group debriefing. To create a supportive and safe learning environment, the new facilitators were told to check in with trainees about their feelings first during the individual debriefing. After facilitating a conversation with the trainee about his or her experience during the simulation encounter, the facilitators would ask if the trainee is open to their feedback. Facilitators always start with identifying strengths and then move on to constructive feedback on trainee's problem areas. An interviewee commented on individual debriefing: "debriefing is not just about giving out information, about having a dialogue. It is also about having a conversation with that participant and making them comfortable to talk about what their experience was like."

During the group debriefing, the facilitators need to help trainees apply PBL and articulate their hunches and hypotheses based on evidence. It is important for facilitators to have in-depth understanding of the safety assessment tool¹² and DCFS procedures¹³ so they can guide the debriefing accordingly and help trainees transfer knowledge into practice. A couple of trainers also emphasized the importance of helping trainees develop a habit of researching DCFS procedures when they have questions or are unclear about investigation process or policy. One trainer described it: "Just not spoon-feeding somebody the answer, but have them research, or think about what you've learned or where you can go and look it up."

Actors

Preparation for their role

The talent agency sent the actors the profiles of their assigned role beforehand, and the actors memorized the characters' back-stories. This helped them get into the mind-set of their character and create the character to the best of their ability. One actor commented that the character breakdown provided by the simulation trainers was also very useful to prepare them for the job.

Some actors were called in to play different roles at different times, and they had to prepare carefully to keep the two roles separate and distinct. One actor mentioned that she saw the case from a different point of view when she played different roles. It enhanced her insight of both roles and enriched her preparation of each character.

Every day the simulation facilitator prepares the actors briefly before training begins. The facilitators check on the actors' emotional state, give them an overview of the simulation coming up that day, review the characters' back stories, offer actors tips for portraying their

¹² The Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP).

¹³ Procedures 300: Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect.

character, and remind them about using non-verbal cues. The actors viewed this routine as very helpful for their daily preparation. Although the simulation is not scripted and actors must improvise their lines, the actors must not create new character or plot elements that diverge from training plans. Introducing new material unconnected to the training objectives can disrupt the training. Once an actor decided on his own to play his part as if he were intoxicated. This was disruptive, because there is a special DCFS protocol for client intoxication, but using this protocol was not one of the training objectives for the day.

The simulation training experience from the actors' perspective

An actor commented that the simulation encounters do not happen “as if the script [is] laid out in front of you with how everything should be” since they are dealing with a real trainee instead of another actor. Every trainee has a different personality and brings a different level of energy into the room. Therefore, every simulation is unique, since the actors respond to each trainee according to the way the trainee approaches the actors. An actor called it “a mirror effect” — the actor mirrors each trainee’s reaction to the simulation. During the intermission of each simulation encounter, the simulation facilitator consults with the actors, who make adjustments if necessary to improve upcoming simulation encounters.

An important piece of the simulation encounter is debriefing. UIS trainers helped the actors learn how to give strength-based feedback to trainees. Actors were told to encourage trainees first and only provide constructive criticism. A particularly important part of the feedback is communication about how trainees made the actors feel. The facilitators never dictated exactly what actors could say, but did intervene if the actors’ feedback was not constructive. The facilitator would bring the focus back to strength-based feedback.

To make the training more life-like, the actors were told to avoid any interaction with trainees except when giving feedback during the individual debriefing. They strive to stay in character the entire time, even when they see trainees outside of the mock apartment. One actor who was interviewed thought trainees might be passive in the simulation encounters if the actors did not add realism in the situation.

Working with the Simulation Facilitators

In their interviews, the actors talked about how they worked closely with the simulation facilitators and felt fully supported and respected by the training staff. They felt that the simulation training staff provide considerable guidance but did not impose on their decisions as actors. Actors felt that others welcomed their feedback, both to improve the training and to help individual trainees improve.

The actors appreciated the working relationship with the trainers and facilitators and welcomed their feedback. One actor specifically commented that UIS trainers were “hands on” and very responsive. Whenever actors had questions or struggled, these trainers were ready with information or help overcoming barriers. Another actor said “they don't allow anyone to feel disconnected in any way. They don't allow us to feel like we're not a part of the big picture.” The actor interviews suggest that simulation training staff created a safe and supportive environment for the actors as they tried to do with the trainees.

Simulation facilitators need to have a blend of skills to work with the actors and trainees.¹⁴ They need to prepare actors well for the day and monitor everyone's emotional and physical conditions during the simulation encounter and individual debriefing. An actor mentioned the importance of the facilitator's role in helping trainees be open for actor's feedback during the individual debriefing. Facilitators help trainees understand actors' feedback and ease any potential anxiety or tension that might arise in the interaction between actor and trainee.

Courtroom Professionals

Attorneys playing the courtroom professionals were given the fact scenario in the court report, but they did not receive a list of questions to ask. They developed questions themselves, as they would in real life. If they played the role of parents' attorney, they would develop questions for the investigators based on deficiencies in the investigators' report or testimony. If acting as a state's attorney, they would develop questions that serve DCFS.

Potential changes for the courtroom simulation

The DCFS legal team has suggested a change in the courtroom simulation format to make it more realistic. Currently all the trainees participating in a given courtroom simulation combine to play the role of one investigator who is testifying. The first few trainees respond to direct examination by the mock state's attorney—that part of the testimony in which they are answering friendly questions by an attorney on their side. The next few trainees respond to the direct examination by the mock parents' attorney, and the next few trainees respond to the direct examination by the mock guardian ad litem representing children. The last few trainees undergo cross-examination from multiple attorneys, who ask trainees tough questions designed to cast doubt on their actions and conclusions. The DCFS legal team thinks every trainee should experience both direct and cross-examinations, as they will actually have to experience in court. At the time data collection for this chapter was completed, the Chicago training staff was considering this recommendation.

1.3 Differences between the Springfield and Chicago Laboratories

Several interviewees from DCFS and UIUC reported that the developers of the Chicago laboratory copied the model of UIS as closely as possible. Thus, the Chicago laboratory used the same training curriculum, simulation scenarios, and character profiles, all based on three actual child protection cases that the Illinois Office of Inspector General evaluated for error reduction purposes. The Chicago program also copies the UIS program in having a mock residence, a mock courtroom, individuals with acting skills who are hired to play clients, legal professionals in the courtroom simulations, and individual and group debriefings. The Chicago and Springfield also shared training methods such as problem-based learning. Despite the Chicago laboratory's general similarity to the original program, however, the Chicago and Springfield laboratories differ in ways that are worth exploring.

¹⁴ Cross, T.P. & Chiu, Y. (2018). *FY2018 Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy for new DCFS investigators*. Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

A house vs. an apartment

UIS uses a house on campus for simulation training. To simulate the experience of traveling to a family's home, trainees are required to drive to the house to participate in the Knock on the Door and Scene Investigation simulations. On the other hand, the Chicago laboratory uses an apartment setting in designated rooms inside a DCFS office building, and the classroom is in another room nearby. Trainees walk down the hall to the mock apartment to participate in the simulations. Interviewees cited benefits for both the Springfield and Chicago set-ups. Having the family's residence be an apartment in the Chicago laboratory simulates the experience of many investigations in Cook County, where many families live in apartments. The Chicago laboratory design also eliminates travel time, freeing up time for other training experiences, and makes it easier for facilitators in the classroom and mock apartment to coordinate their work because of the proximity of the rooms. On the other hand, the necessity of driving to the house and finding the right address, as trainees in Springfield do, can stir up emotions, which provides a valuable experience for trainees' future work.

One significant environmental hazard in the Springfield residence was changed in Chicago because it was inconsistent with an apartment simulation. A dog crate was placed in the Springfield house and clues were added to indicate that one of the children was being locked in the dog crate. In the Chicago laboratory, the dog crate was replaced with a closet where the child was being imprisoned.

Standardized patients vs. method actors

UIS uses individuals from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Standardized Patient Program to play the roles of family members in simulations. UIS recommended using standardized patients in the Chicago laboratory, since they are trained to deal with underlying conditions and to provide feedback on personal communication skills. Yet, DCFS and UIUC decided to hire professional actors rather than standardized patients. DCFS felt that it was cost effective to hire actors. DCFS also thought that using actors gave the Chicago laboratory access to a large pool of qualified candidates with diverse ethnic backgrounds, since Chicago has a number of theaters and many performers available to hire. DCFS also felt that working with a theatrical agency would facilitate future plans for using actors in training videos. Working with the talent agency had another benefit as well: if an actor cannot or does not show up for a simulation within 30 minutes of its scheduled time, the agency will send another actor on short notice. However, actors do not have the training in underlying conditions and in providing feedback that standardized patients do. To mitigate actors' lack of training and experience in these areas, UIS staff worked closely with UIUC to select actors who were better at these aspects of the simulation, and provided special training to actors to help actors build their skills in these areas.

Juvenile court professionals vs. DCFS legal team attorneys

UIS recruited juvenile court judges and procurators in the courtroom simulation due to their first-hand court experience in those roles. DCFS and UIUC decided instead to ask the DCFS legal team to play the parts of the judge, the prosecuting attorney, and the opposing attorney. The DCFS regional legal counsels are active in hearings and represent DCFS staff in court. The deputy of the DCFS legal team was very willing to support the training, which saved UIUC much time at a point in which DCFS felt significant time pressure to launch the Chicago laboratory. It would have been time-consuming to recruit volunteers from the juvenile courts.

Some interviewees also saw another advantage of using the DCFS legal team. They were concerned that using sitting judges for the courtroom simulation might introduce a bias against certain trainees later, if the trainees did not perform well in the court simulation and later faced the same judge in an actual court case.

On the other hand, several interviewees expressed concern that the DCFS legal team's lack of direct experience in the specific roles they played in the mock courtroom made the courtroom simulations less realistic. One interviewee saw added benefits from recruiting actual judges and procurators from juvenile court—in this person's view, this could create buy-in and support from the court system for collaborating to build a more confident and competent child protection workforce. Other interviewees feel that the judge's rich real-life experience would add value to the feedback that Chicago trainees receive in simulation training.

There were differences between Chicago and Springfield regarding the process in the mock courtroom. Unlike the courtroom professionals at the UIS trainings in Springfield, the professionals in the Chicago laboratory had little interaction with the simulation facilitators before or after the courtroom simulation and did not receive feedback from them. However, the legal professionals did receive feedback from each other after simulations. In the mock courtroom in Chicago, only the legal team professionals gave feedback to trainees, whereas in the Springfield mock courtroom, all the professionals, including simulation and classroom trainers gave feedback during the debriefing. One interviewee specifically commented that it was better to allocate all debriefing time in the courtroom to the legal professionals, because they need the time. This person argued that simulation facilitators and classroom trainers have sufficient time to provide feedback on other simulation days.

1.4 Future Plans

DCFS has a number of future plans for simulation training. It looks forward to setting up a simulation laboratory in each of its four regions. The Springfield laboratory is in the Central region and the Chicago laboratory in Cook County. DCFS also recently awarded a contract to UIS to develop a new laboratory in the Southern region, and has plans to issue a contract to establish a new laboratory in the Northern region. UIS will continue to develop new simulation training curricula for current and future sites in collaboration with DCFS and UIUC.

DCFS and its partner organizations are planning to increase the current pool of actors. They are seeking more Spanish-speaking actors and actors from additional ethnic groups. Some stakeholders have discussed the possibility of recruiting actual judges to play the judge role in the courtroom simulations at the Chicago laboratory. The idea of expanding the pool of

courtroom professionals in Chicago to current or retired judges is still being considered. To smooth transitions between the classroom training and simulation training, trainers are also thinking about having simulation facilitators introduce themselves to the trainees in the classroom before the simulation training week. Moreover, they also plan to initiate meetings between classroom trainers and simulation facilitators, to increase their familiarity with each other and the cohesiveness of their working relationship. DCFS also plans to expand use of a second mock apartment in the simulation training space that currently receives little use. They plan to use it for different case scenarios (e.g., investigations of domestic violence or human trafficking) and different types of training (e.g., training of foster parents).

Discussion

The data from the interviews and focus groups suggest a number of conclusions about the development of the Chicago laboratory and the simulation training program as a whole. From these conclusions, we make recommendations for promoting the future development of the program.

Reinvention

E. M. Rogers' classic work *Diffusion of Innovations* (2003) discusses normal processes that occur when an innovative program is adopted in a new site.¹⁵ It is common for new program developers adopting an innovation to choose to alter certain elements of the innovation in response to their particular environment. Rogers labels this process *re-invention*. In itself, re-invention is neither good nor bad. A re-invention that eliminates key elements of an innovation that are necessary to produce the desired outcome can be problematic. But a re-invention that better adapts an innovation to a given environment can improve the innovation. Research evidence also suggests that a certain degree of re-invention can increase the sustainability of an innovation.¹⁶

Just how much of a re-invention is the Chicago laboratory? Rogers suggests that one can measure the degree of re-invention by identifying the number of similar and different elements in the replication as compared to the original program. When we compare the Chicago and Springfield elements in this way, we find a large number of common elements: a physical environment specifically designed to simulate a practice environment; practice-oriented scenarios; individuals trained to enact the role of family members; legal professionals enacting roles that they learned from their own experience in court; training staff; learning objectives, and training methods, such as problem-based learning; and debriefing. These have been implemented in both sites and have been monitored to be similar.

The differences between the Chicago and Springfield laboratories are circumscribed. There is a difference in the setting of the mock residence, a difference that mirrors the contrast between a suburban/rural and urban environment. The actors in Chicago differed from the standardized patients in their prior training and experience and their use of the craft of acting. The process of selecting Chicago actors and the training UIS provided the actors may have mitigated the effect

¹⁵ Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th Ed.). New York: Free Press.

¹⁶ Rogers, *ibid*

of this difference. The legal professionals in the Chicago courtroom have experience in the juvenile court, but not in the specific roles they play in the mock courtroom, as the professionals in Springfield do. In Chicago, the legal professionals manage the courtroom simulation and the simulation facilitator has a small role in the courtroom, while in Springfield, the facilitators have a substantial role in the mock courtroom.

The sum total of the similarities and dissimilarities suggests that the Chicago laboratory is a modest re-invention of the Springfield laboratory. The combined work of DCFS, UIUC and UIS aimed at producing programs that were comparable clearly had an effect, and the extra work and travel of UIS trainers to help make this happen are noteworthy. To date, we see no evidence for a major difference in the impact of the Chicago and Springfield programs.

Notice the major role cost effectiveness and time savings played in the re-invention. UIS reported that it was cost-effective and timely for UIS to use an unused frame house on campus that was lent at minimal cost, while in Chicago it was cost-effective and timely for DCFS to use its existing office space. Several interviewees reported that it was more cost-effective to use professional actors in Chicago, where they are plentiful, than to use standardized patients. There was a significant times savings in using the DCFS Legal Team to play the mock courtroom professionals rather than to invest in recruiting and managing volunteers. As simulation training expands while resources for child protection are always limited, cost effectiveness may well play a role in additional re-invention. It will be important to track re-invention as simulation training expands to the Southern and Northern regions and try to assess its effects.

Conclusion

Evaluation data collected since 2016 support the continued development of simulation training for DCFS workers. DCFS is implementing ambitious plans to open new laboratories and use simulations to teach new sets of workers a wide range of different skills. The experience with the Chicago laboratory suggests that expansion can be successful while still needing to deal with challenges of maintaining the capacity and quality of the simulation training program. A collaborative effort among all the partner organizations and attention and resources devoted to expanding the availability of skilled facilitators and trainers hold promise for using simulations broadly to enhance the effectiveness of training at DCFS. In Chapter 5 we include recommendations that address the issue of availability of skilled facilitators and trainers.

Chapter 2: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST)

Simulation training is thought to increase investigators' preparedness for and confidence in their work, which is thought to have a positive impact on both investigators' experience of their work and the quality of their work with families. The Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) measure was designed to examine trainees' experience of change over the course of simulation training. During the week of simulation training, trainees rated their confidence daily on a scale of thirteen child protection work skills.

Methods

The CPTA director assisted the evaluators with developing the DEST and a pilot test was conducted in early FY2019. The original DEST was revised based on the pilot study and the current DEST (DEST 2.0) was implemented in December 2018. The initial DEST findings were reported in the FY2019 evaluation report.¹⁷ This year's report includes updated results from FY2020.

The DEST includes a 13-item scale measuring trainees' confidence level. Trainees rated their confidence level on each specific item from 1 (low) to 7 (high). The DEST also includes a set of questions about trainees' experience of the feedback they received, and an open-ended question that asks trainees to share a daily reflection (see Appendix B). The DEST is implemented at 6 time points over the course of simulation training week: Monday morning (baseline), and then at the end of each day, Monday through Friday.

All the trainees attending simulation training were asked to participate in this study. Trainees were given a brief amount of time to complete DEST over the internet at the end of each day of the simulation training week. Trainees may choose not to participate or may terminate participation at any time. Trainers did not know which trainees participated and which did not. The data collected through the secure website were automatically saved on a secure server managed by CFRC. The DEST evaluation was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Response rates

The response rate for the DEST was calculated by dividing the number of responses in the DEST survey (numerator) by the total number of trainees in simulation training (denominator). Between May 1, 2019, and March 6, 2020, a total 149 trainees participated in the simulation training. The DEST data included 750 responses from 148 respondents who filled out the DEST at one time point or more. The daily response rate for the six time points ranged from 72% to 91% (Table 2.1). As compared to the average response rate of online surveys (34.2%),¹⁸ the weighted average daily response rate of 84% is high. A large percentage of trainees completed the DEST. It is reasonable to conclude that results from the DEST measure are representative of

¹⁷ Chiu, Y. & Cross, T.P. (2019). *FY2019 Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators*. Final report. Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

¹⁸ Poynton, T. A., DeFouw, E. R., & Morizio, L. J. (2019). A Systematic Review of Online Response Rates in Four Counseling Journals. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 97(1), 33–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12233>

trainees, and the measure is being used successfully with investigators receiving simulation training.

Though all response rates were high, Monday morning (baseline) had the highest response rate, while Wednesday had the lowest response rate. When examining the response rate by site, a similar pattern across the days of the simulation training week was evident in both the Springfield and Chicago sites. Overall, Wednesday still had a lower response rate (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Response rate by each time point

Time Point	All (Trainees=149)		UIS (Trainees=60)		Chicago (Trainees=89)	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Baseline	134	90%	55	92%	79	89%
Monday	125	84%	44	73%	81	91%
Tuesday	135	91%	56	93%	79	89%
Wednesday	107	72%	49	82%	58	65%
Thursday	130	87%	54	90%	75	84%
Friday	119	80%	47	78%	72	81%

The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the confidence scale at each of the six time points were all larger than 0.95, which indicates excellent internal consistency among the 13 items in the scale. Out of 148 respondents, 70 (47%) completed the DEST at all six time points. Oneway analysis of variance was used to compare average confidence scores over time for all trainees, whether or not they had responded at all six time points. Repeated measures analysis of variance was used to measure change among those 70 who completed the DEST at each time point.

Results

2.1 Changes in Confidence Level

Figure 2.1 shows the changes for the entire sample over six time points for the 13 items of the confidence scale. All 13 confidence level items showed a substantial linear increase over the course of simulation week. Confidence levels at baseline (Monday morning) ranged from an average of 4.3 (work as a DCFS investigator) to an average 4.9 (engage families). Confidence levels on the last day ranged between an average of 5.9 and an average of 6.0 for those same areas. The average trainee’s confidence level increased steadily from baseline to the last day (Friday) across all 13 items. As Table 2.1 shows, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) with linear contrasts were statistically significant, indicating that there was a significant linear increase in confidence over the course of the simulation-training week. Table 2.1 also shows the results of Games-Howell post-hoc comparison of means tests. An interesting result of these tests is that they show confidence in testifying increasing significantly on Friday of the simulation training week, the day after trainees experience the testifying in court simulation.

Figure 2.1 Confidence Level by Time Point

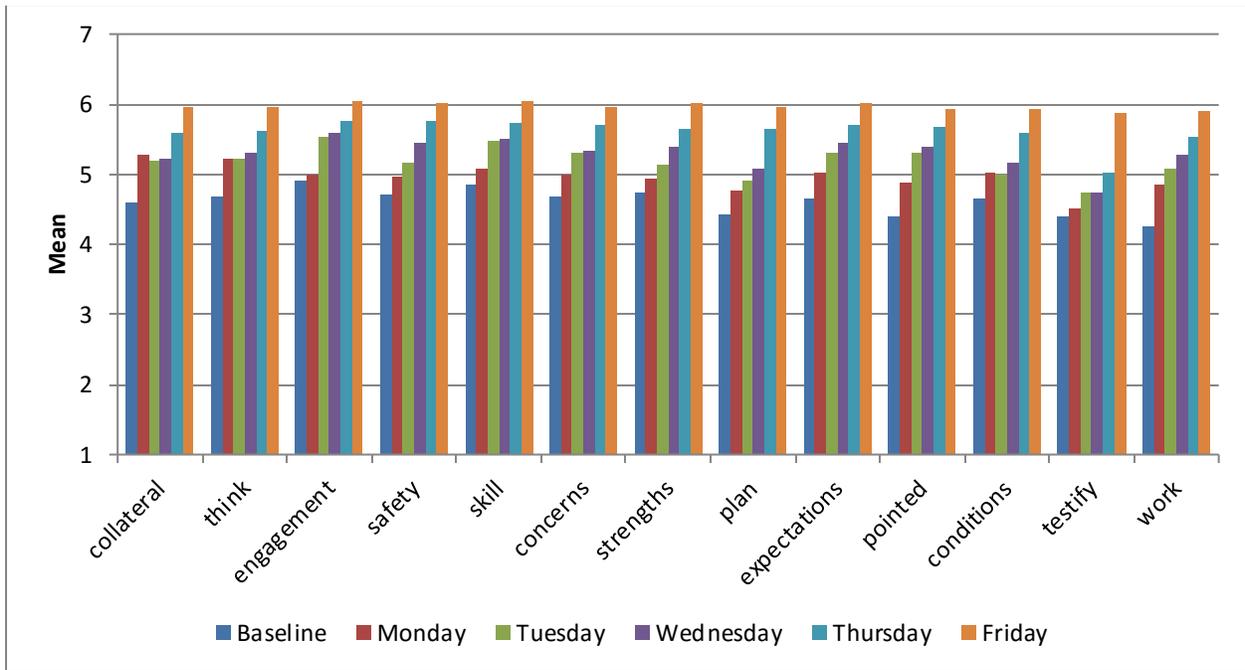


Table 2.1 One-way ANOVA Comparison of Confidence Level over the Course of the Week, Test of Linear Contrasts

Confidence Scale	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	Games Howell Post Hoc Test
Gather info from collateral contacts	5	25.65	18.599	<.000	B<M, <T, <W, <Th, <F F>B, >M, >T, >W
Think critically on facts vs. hypotheses	5	23.85	20.664	<.000	B<M, <T, <W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, >M, >T, >W
Engage families	5	24.16	19.637	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F T>M; Th>B, >M F>B, >M, >T, >W
Assess safety	5	29.51	23.739	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F W>B, >M; Th>B, >M, >T F>B, >M, >T, >W
Integrate compassion and investigative skill	5	23.73	19.153	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F W>B, >M; Th>B, >M F>B, >M, >T, >W
Address any concerns about family statements and behaviors	5	27.42	20.477	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, >M, >T, >W

Table 2.1 Continued

Confidence Scale	df	MS	F	P	Games Howell Post Hoc Test
Identify family strengths	5	27.72	20.333	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, > M, >T, >W
Explain need for safety plan and/or protective custody	5	41.31	26.121	<.000	B<W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T, >W F>B, > M, >T, >W
Explain DCFS role and expectations for keeping children safe	5	30.07	21.767	<.000	B<T, <W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, > M, >T, >W
Answer pointed questions from parents and caregivers	5	39.65	28.607	<.000	B<M, <T, <W, <Th, <F W>M; Th>B, >M F>B, >M, >T, >W
Address underlying conditions	5	34.36	14.817	<.000	B<Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, > M, >T, >W
Testify in court	5	34.36	14.817	<.000	B<Th, <F F>B, > M, >T, >W, >Th
Work as a DCFS investigator	5	40.43	25.960	<.000	B<M, <T, <W, <Th, <F Th>B, >M, >T F>B, > M, >T, >W, >Th

To further examine the change between baseline and the last day of training, an effect size (Cohen's d) was calculated for the difference in means between baseline and the last day. We followed Cohen's guidelines on what constitutes a small effect size (d=0.2), medium effect size (d=0.5), and large effect size (d=0.8) ¹⁹ Table 2.2 shows the means in respondents' confidence levels for baseline and the end of simulation training and the effect size for the difference. Note that Cohen's d approached or exceeded 1.0 for each measure, indicating very large increases in confidence.

¹⁹ See Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112, 155-159.

Table 2.2 Statistics for Changes between Baseline and Last Day of Simulation Training

Confidence Scale	Baseline			Friday			Cohen's d ²⁰
	N	Mean	sd	N	Mean	sd	
Gather info from collateral contacts	133	4.6	1.41	116	6.0	1.09	1.07
Think critically on facts vs. hypotheses	133	4.7	1.25	118	6.0	1.01	1.14
Engage families	133	4.9	1.33	118	6.0	1.00	0.96
Assess safety	133	4.7	1.26	116	6.0	0.95	1.16
Integrate compassion and investigative skill	131	4.9	1.34	118	6.1	0.99	1.02
Address any concerns about family statements and behaviors	132	4.7	1.32	117	6.0	1.05	1.09
Identify family strengths	133	4.7	1.30	118	6.0	0.99	1.10
Explain need for safety plan and/or protective custody	133	4.4	1.48	117	6.0	0.98	1.23
Explain DCFS role and expectations for keeping children safe	133	4.6	1.47	117	6.0	1.03	1.08
Answer pointed questions from parents and caregivers	132	4.4	1.41	118	5.9	1.08	1.24
Address underlying conditions	133	4.7	1.42	118	5.9	0.97	1.03
Testify in court	132	4.4	1.68	117	5.9	1.14	1.03
Work as a DCFS investigator	132	4.3	1.59	117	5.9	1.00	1.23
Total Scale Mean	133	4.6	1.22	118	6.0	0.93	1.25

Repeated measures analysis of variance is a powerful method for examining change over the time of the evaluation week because each trainee in the analysis is tracked at each time point. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with the 70 respondents who completed the DEST at every time point. Differences across time points were statistically significant for all 13 items and the results showed a linear increase each day during the simulation training week (Table 2.3). The confidence level of trainees on performing the 13 investigative skills showed a significant linear increase over the course of simulation training week (Figure 2.2).

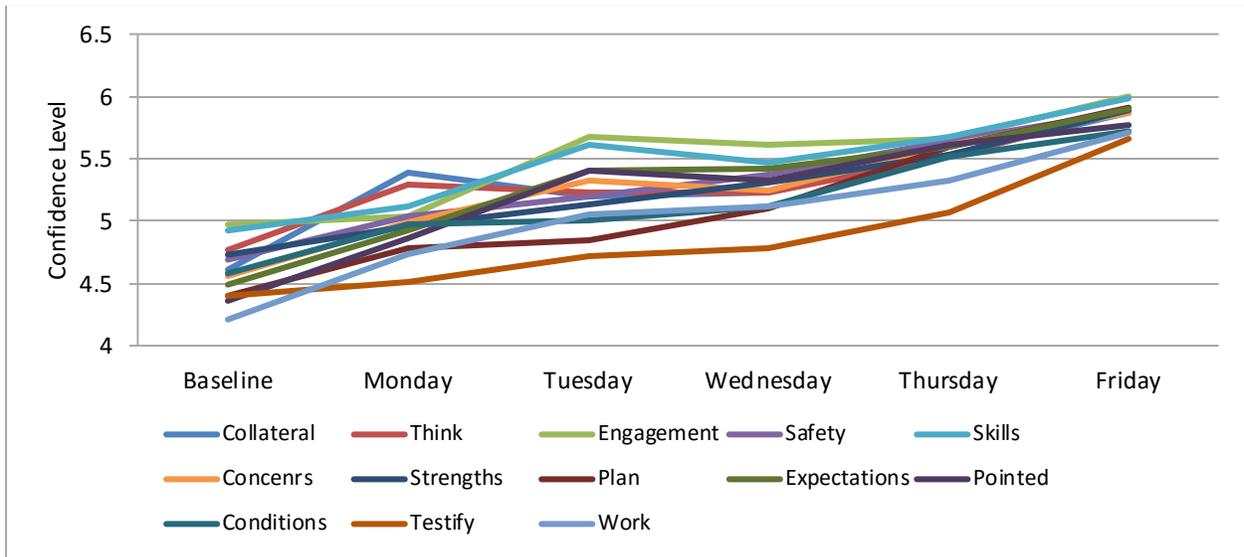
²⁰ Note: Rules of thumb on magnitudes of Cohen's d are 0.2-Small; 0.5-Medium; and 0.8-Large.

Table 2.3 Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Test of Linear Effects²¹

Confidence Scale	N	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gather info from collateral contacts	69	1	45.35	52.8	.000
Think critically on facts vs. hypotheses	69	1	39.72	65.6	.000
Engage families	70	1	48.01	49.3	.000
Assess safety	68	1	61.26	88.6	.000
Integrate compassion and investigative skill	66	1	44.22	45.0	.000
Address any concerns about family statements and behaviors	68	1	68.02	51.7	.000
Identify family strengths	70	1	59.73	92.7	.000
Explain need for safety plan and/or protective custody	68	1	102.35	85.3	.000
Explain DCFS role and expectations for keeping children safe	69	1	80.62	64.4	.000
Answer pointed questions from parents and caregivers	69	1	83.74	92.4	.000
Address underlying conditions	67	1	53.09	49.3	.000
Testify in court	67	1	61.72	44.8	.000
Work as a DCFS investigator	66	1	82.40	59.3	.000

²¹ Note: For each repeated measures ANOVA, the Greenhouse-Geisser and Huynh-Feldt $p < .001$ on $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \dots = \mu_6$

Figure 2.2 Changes of Confidence Level over 6 Time Points of Simulation Training Week



The effect size analysis²² comparing the means between baseline and the last day also showed a consistent pattern with previous analyses. Those who completed the DEST every day reported a large increase of confidence level across all 13 investigative skills from baseline to the last day (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Statistics for Changes between Baseline and Last Day of Simulation Training

Confidence Scale	Baseline			Friday			Cohen's d ²³
	N	Mean	sd	N	Mean	sd	
Gather info from collateral contacts	69	4.6	1.46	69	5.9	1.03	1.00
Think critically on facts vs. hypotheses	69	4.8	1.30	69	5.9	0.96	0.99
Engage families	70	5.0	1.29	70	6.0	0.93	0.92
Assess safety	68	4.7	1.26	68	5.9	0.97	1.06
Integrate compassion and investigative skill	66	4.9	1.37	66	6.0	0.92	0.91
Address any concerns about family statements and behaviors	68	4.6	1.41	68	5.9	0.99	1.08
Identify family strengths	70	4.7	1.26	70	5.9	0.97	1.03
Explain need for safety plan and/or protective custody	68	4.4	1.44	68	5.9	0.91	1.26

²² Ibid.

²³ Note: Rules of thumb on magnitudes of Cohen's d are 0.2-Small; 0.5-Medium; and 0.8-Large.

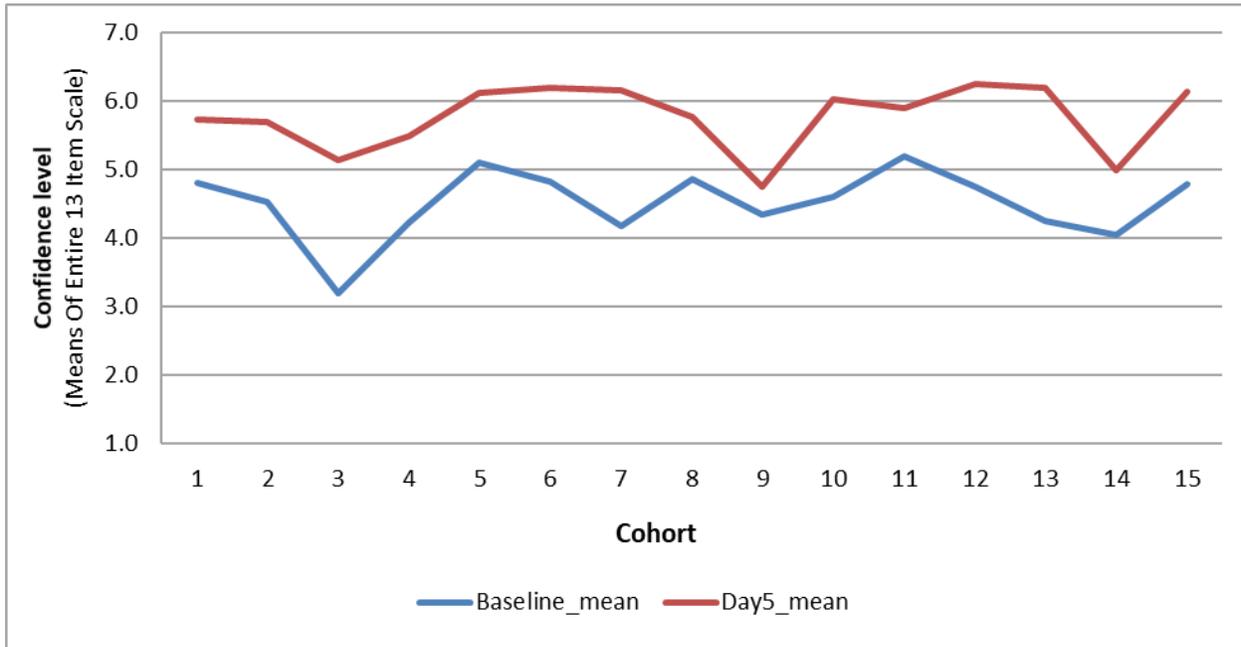
Explain DCFS role and expectations for keeping children safe	69	4.5	1.55	69	5.9	0.97	1.09
Answer pointed questions from parents and caregivers	69	4.4	1.40	69	5.8	1.06	1.13
Address underlying conditions	67	4.6	1.45	67	5.7	1.01	0.91
Testify in court	67	4.4	1.62	67	5.7	1.30	0.86
Work as a DCFS investigator	66	4.2	1.61	66	5.7	1.08	1.09
Total Scale Mean	70	4.6	1.21	70	5.9	0.92	1.16

2.2 Examining DEST Results Across Cohorts

CFRC has collected DEST 2.0 data consistently since May 2019 and has data for more than a score of training cohorts. Comparing DEST results across cohorts enables us to see if changes in trainees' confidence have been consistent across time. This is a form of quality control on simulation training. We examined DEST results by training cohort from May 2019 to March 2020. Figure 2.3 depicts the results. The blue line shows the mean confidence level (across the 12 scales) at baseline for each cohort and the red line shows the mean confidence level for each cohort at week's end. Thus the gap between the blue line and red line represents the increase in confidence over the course of the week. We can see that there is a noticeable gap between the blue line and the red line in most cohorts, indicating substantial change in most weeks. The sample size of each cohort ranged from 2 to 21. Both trainings in Springfield and trainings in Chicago are represented. In 3 of the 15 cohorts, trainings occurred simultaneously in both Springfield and Chicago and their data are pooled.

However, there is one time cohort in which there was only a small change from baseline to Day 5, representing little increase in confidence during the simulation training week. This suggests that the increase in confidence from simulation is likely but not guaranteed. Each data point is based on only 2 to 21 cases, so each point by itself is not that reliable.

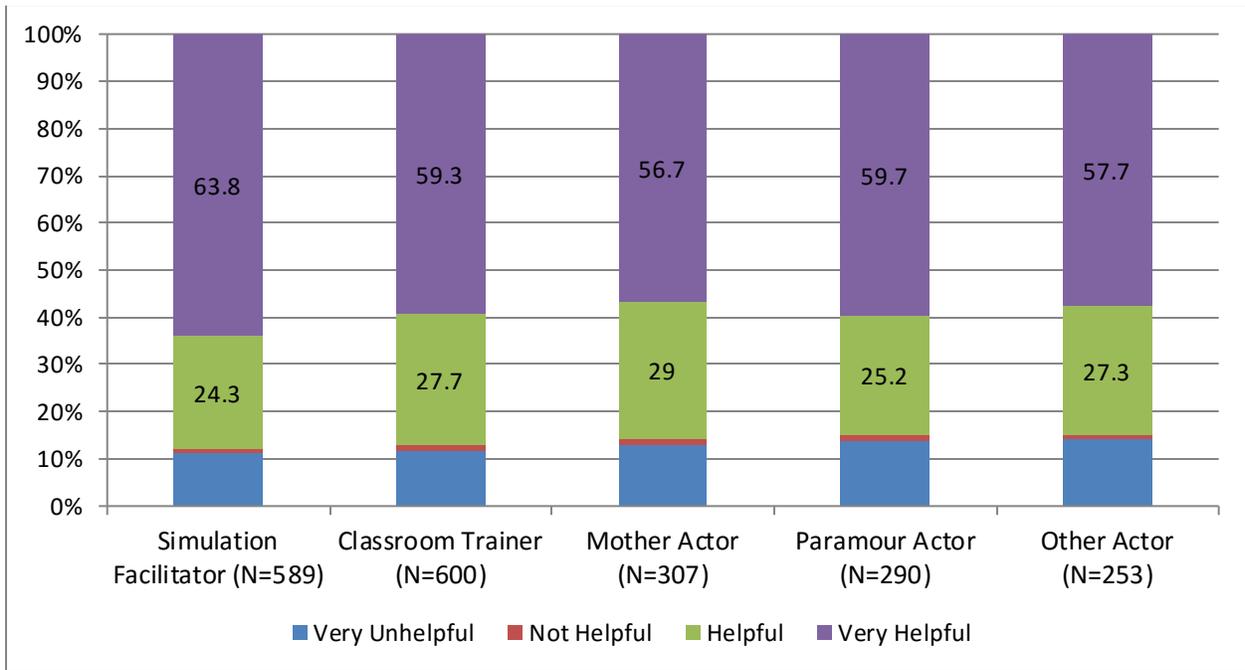
Figure 2.3 Trainee Confidence Levels at the Beginning and End of the Simulation Training Week by Cohort in FY2020



2.3 Rating of Trainers’ and Actors’ Feedback

Feedback from trainers and actors during the individual and group debriefings is significant to facilitate trainees’ learning. In the DEST, we asked participants to rate the helpfulness of trainers’ and actors’ feedback between Tuesday and Thursday (the days when the trainees received feedback from them). The majority of respondents found the feedback during simulation training either very helpful or helpful (see Figure 2.4). There was no difference in the helpfulness of feedback across roles or time points.

Figure 2.4 Rating of Trainers' and Actors' Feedback



2.4 Content Analysis of the Daily Reflective log

At the end of the daily DEST survey, an open-ended question was asked: “What were the most meaningful concepts or skills you learned today?” We conducted a content analysis of those comments. Most frequently, trainees reported that they had learned the skills that were the focus of the training that (e.g., the calling the reporter simulation taught trainees skills for calling reporter, the knock on the door simulation taught them skills for engaging families, etc.). The main themes are associated with the simulation exercise(s) of the day (see Table 2.5). When the PBL process was introduced, trainees noted that they learned PBL skills. In addition to reporting that they learned about the task at hand that day, trainees also reported that they learned about their own behavior from feedback from others, that they developed greater self-awareness, and that their confidence increased.

Table 2.5 What Trainees Reported They Learned, by Day

Day	Main Simulation Exercise(s)	Number of Responses	What Trainees Learned or Gained
Monday	Calling the reporter PBL debriefing	114	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for calling the reporter (n=58) • The Problem-Based Learning method (n=38) • Benefits of working with trainers (n=9)
Tuesday	Knock on the door	134	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for engaging the family (n=47) • Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others (n=41) • Greater self-awareness (n=38) • How to explain the DCFS role (n=12)
Wednesday	Scene investigation Supervisor simulation	106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for conducting a safety assessment (n=41) • Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others (n=31) • Skills for engaging with families or identifying family strengths (n=21) • How to address concerns with families and explain the investigation process (n=20) • Greater self-awareness (n=15)
Thursday	Fishbowl: interview parents Courtroom preparation Medical simulation	114	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to answer pointed questions from parents and explain the need for protective custody (n=44) • How to prepare for court (n=21) • How to gather info from collateral contacts (Medical simulation) (n=17) • Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others (n=14)
Friday	Courtroom simulation	140	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to testify and understand the courtroom process (n=92) • Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others (n=32) • Feeling confident or prepared (n=19) • Greater self-awareness (n=15)

A number of participants also wrote in suggestions about the training in this text field. A number of suggestions concerned extending the simulation week:

I believe that if the SIMS portion of training was extended and the in classroom was reduced it would be much more beneficial. This would allow for each individual to go through the entire simulation on their own and have a chance to develop those skills through trial and error rather than watching your peers.

Simulation training in general this week has been great assistance in learning how to be a CPS worker. I would recommend more than one week of simulation training, and being able to do simulation in conjunction with the training.

Overall this simulation is something that needs to be implemented for 3 weeks and then 3 weeks in the class room. We will never be able to learn or cover everything, but the simulation process is too important to only do 1 week of.

The way we currently train needs to be changed. Classroom and simulation need to be done in conjunction with one another back to back. Example, two days classroom and a day of simulation. It would make more sense to investigators and provide them with a better understanding of procedure.

In my opinion, the simulations training should last two weeks instead of one. The first week should be the walk through and significant support from the instructors. However, the second week should allow the investigator to take the lead with the investigation, interviews, home safety check etc."

A few participants commented on the actors' race:

Although the instructor are knowledgeable of DCFS policy and procedures it would be nice to simulation similar to our own race, meaning having some African American present the simulation.

Please provide actors who are of African American descent. The depiction of the family presented in the simulation was an unrealistic view of how families are portrayed in real life. The majority of children in DCFS care are of African American descent. Please make the adjustments for a more realistic experience Thanks.

On Thursday, by design, the actors did not give feedback after the "fish bowl" parent interview exercise. Numerous participants expressed the desire to receive actors' feedback on their interview skills on this day.

I believe we did not receive feedback from the actors, though I felt it could be helpful to hear from their perspective of the interview.

Several participants had other suggestions about the courtroom simulation:

I would have liked to be able to testify in the direct as well as the cross to understand how I should formulate the response.

Great experience with the courtroom stimulation, could have been two days.

I believe court should be more than a half day. I would like for the simulation to be longer so we can testify with the SA and Defense Attorney.

Court testimony training should be added to the CWEL training as well. It was helpful to have an expert explain the court process.

They also had other suggestions about simulation exercises:

I wish that for the future the training department is able to incorporate more the procedures 300, or even pretending to add a safety plan to the case. I did not have the opportunity to complete with the safety plan, and perhaps adding this to simulations would be great. The trainees would have the opportunity to complete a safety plan, and let the parents break it, so eventually DCFS takes custody.

Would have liked to receive individual constructive feedback for the full week of SIMS, not only second day. Feedback to effectively assist me as I apply new and/or acquired skills out in the field. Feedback could be beneficial for the new CPI at the conclusion of SIMS. Possibly include the feedback in the video recording vs sharing it in the office and only for one session.

[On Wednesday] I think it would be better if both investigators are allowed to interact with the family at the same time. I would like it to be where we tag team the family instead of one person talking while the other is silent.

[On Wednesday] The supervision time after simulation needs to be available for everyone. The time should be managed by the trainer so everyone gets a chance to debrief.

[On Thursday] During this simulation, I felt it was distracting to have an audience, though helpful to witness others conduct the interview. Also, my anxiousness may have been heightened, as I felt the anxiety/eagerness within the room, which impacted my ability to focus on the interview and the need to address certain concerns. I would suggest having an interview within a separate room with camera/microphone for classroom to observe, and the interviewer still has the option to "phone a friend" or "tap out". And while filling out the survey/writing notes, I work better within a quieter atmosphere, as side conversations and other sounds in the room is distracting.

[On Thursday] Everyone should have the experience of talking to the parents and confronting them and telling them what the next step is like safety plan and possibly court involvement.

Conclusion

The Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) provides valuable real-time data on trainees' experience of simulation and is the only evaluation method to date that measures change over the course of the simulation training week. As in previous years, the DEST in FY2020 shows that the confidence that trainees report increased substantially from the beginning to the end of the simulation training week. Trainees showed linear increases in confidence for each of the 13 skills measured by the DEST. Confidence in testifying in court increased significantly after

trainees had experienced the courtroom simulation. The limitation of the DEST is that it measures trainees' subjective sense of their abilities, and is not an objective measure of their skills. Nevertheless, DEST results are important because trainees' appraisal of their skills is likely to have some validity and training is unlikely to be effective if trainees do not believe that their skills are increasing.

The analysis of DEST results showed that increases in confidence were consistent across cohorts in FY2020, including both cohorts with Springfield trainees and Chicago trainees. Because sample sizes for the DEST were small and the reliability of individual results is limited, we think it is inadvisable to look at an individual cohort with smaller changes in the DEST and try to figure out what happened at that time. A better use of the cohort results is to conclude that increases in confidence during the simulation training week are typical but not guaranteed, so quality control is important.

Each member of the simulation team received positive feedback from large majorities of trainees on the DEST. This provides some validation of the contributions of facilitators and trainers, actors and courtroom professionals, and the efforts of the simulation training team to prepare different contributors for their role. A number of trainees also used the DEST on their own initiative to offer suggestions for improving simulation training. We recommend that the simulation training team read and consider these suggestions, and be alert to the accumulation of similar suggestions across trainees over time.

The responses to the daily question about meaningful concepts or skills showed that most trainees felt like they were learning the skills taught each day. They also suggest some of the general impact of simulation training on confidence and self-awareness, and gave trainees an opportunity to make suggestions in the midst of their training experience. One of the most significant pair of suggestions concerned the actors' race. We will discuss that more in the recommendations section of the final chapter.

Chapter 3: Post-Training Satisfaction Survey

All newly hired child protection investigators participate in Certification Training for Child Protection, which includes five weeks of classroom training and a week of simulation training. DCFS administers an online post-training satisfaction survey on the Certification Training experience to trainees. The previous annual evaluation report analyzed survey responses from February 2016 to April 2019.²⁴ For this year's evaluation, DCFS provided an updated data set that included survey responses from February 2019 to February 2020. This chapter reports trainees' satisfaction ratings over this time period and also compares results for simulation training, classroom training and for the program. Chapter 4 provides qualitative results from the analysis of open-ended items in the post-training satisfaction survey.

Methods

The post-training survey includes 27 questions about classroom training, 8 questions about simulation training, and 2 questions about the overall program. Each of the items uses a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree." Descriptive statistics were calculated. Table 3.1 displays the corresponding variable names that the evaluators created for these analyses.

Table 3.1 Simulation training satisfaction questions in the survey

Variable name	Question in the survey
Sim_Prepared	I felt prepared to participate in the SIM lab.
Sim_Environment	The simulation environment was a safe learning environment.
Sim_Learning	I felt the training was conducted in an environment conducive to learning.
Sim_RealisticScenario	The scenario environment was realistic. I was able to incorporate my training into practice.
Sim_RealisticExperience	The SIM lab provided a realistic experience of the challenges I will face when working in the field.
Sim_Confidence	Participating in the scenarios helped to increase my confidence in my role.
Sim_Debriefing	I felt respected during my debriefing.
Sim_Feedback	The debriefing sessions provided valuable feedback.

Results

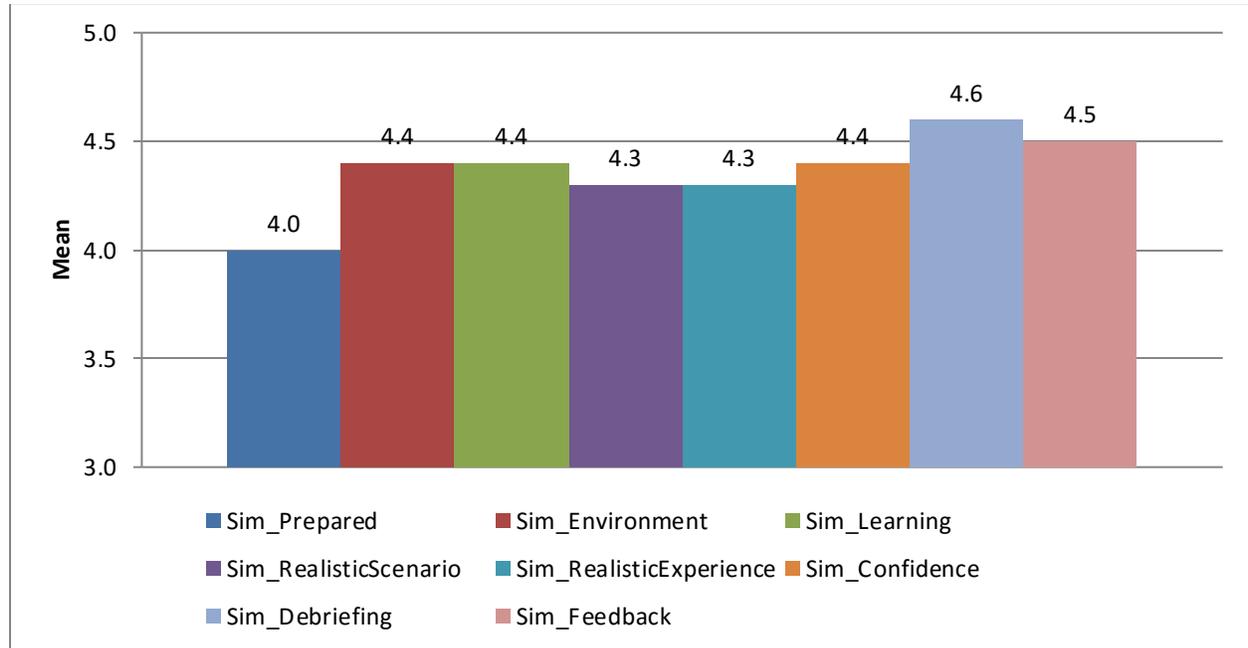
3.1 Simulation Training Satisfaction

There were 92 survey respondents between February 2019 and February 2020. On a 5-point scale (strongly disagree=1; disagree=2; undecided=3; agree=4; strongly agree=5), the mean of the eight questions ranged from 4.0 (I felt prepared to participate in the SIM lab) to 4.6 (I felt respected during my debriefing; see Figure 3.1). Thus for most of these scales, the average

²⁴ Chiu, Y., & Cross, T. P. (2019). *FY2019 Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators*. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

score was between agree and strongly agree, indicating a high level of satisfaction with simulation training.

Figure 3.1 Simulation Training Satisfaction Rating



We compared mean scores on the eight items using a repeated measures analysis of variance, which was statistically significant (Greenhouse-Geiser $F(7, 342.79) = 10.33, p < .001$). Trainees' ratings on feeling prepared for simulation training were significantly lower on average than all their other satisfaction ratings (Bonferroni-adjusted p values on comparisons ranged from .001 to .039). The average score for the feeling prepared question was 'agree', not 'strongly agree', and 21.8% of trainees disagreed with this statement or were undecided. There were no significant differences between other satisfaction items, all of which were in the range between agree and strongly agree on average.

We compared mean satisfaction ratings for the current fiscal year to mean satisfaction ratings from previous fiscal years.²⁵ The mean satisfaction ratings for FY2020²⁶ were comparable to those from the most recent previous fiscal years (Figure 3.2). Overall, the trainees indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements on all eight scales measuring simulation training. As has been apparent for several years, satisfaction scores in recent years have not reached the extremely high levels they achieved in the first two years of the programs.

²⁵ See Chiu, Y., & Cross, T. P. (2019). *FY2019 Program Evaluation of the Child Protection Training Academy for New DCFS Investigators*. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

²⁶ Includes survey responses from February 2019 to February 2020

3.2 Analysis of Classroom, Simulation, and Overall Program Ratings

Mean satisfaction scores were calculated across the simulation training items, the classroom items, and the overall program items. The means were similar: classroom training mean=4.3, simulation training mean=4.4, and overall program mean=4.4 (Table 3.3). Each of these indicated that trainees averaged between “agree” and “strongly agree” on their answers to the positively worded items on these scales, indicating considerable satisfaction on average.

Figure 3.2 Simulation Training Satisfaction Rating by Fiscal Year

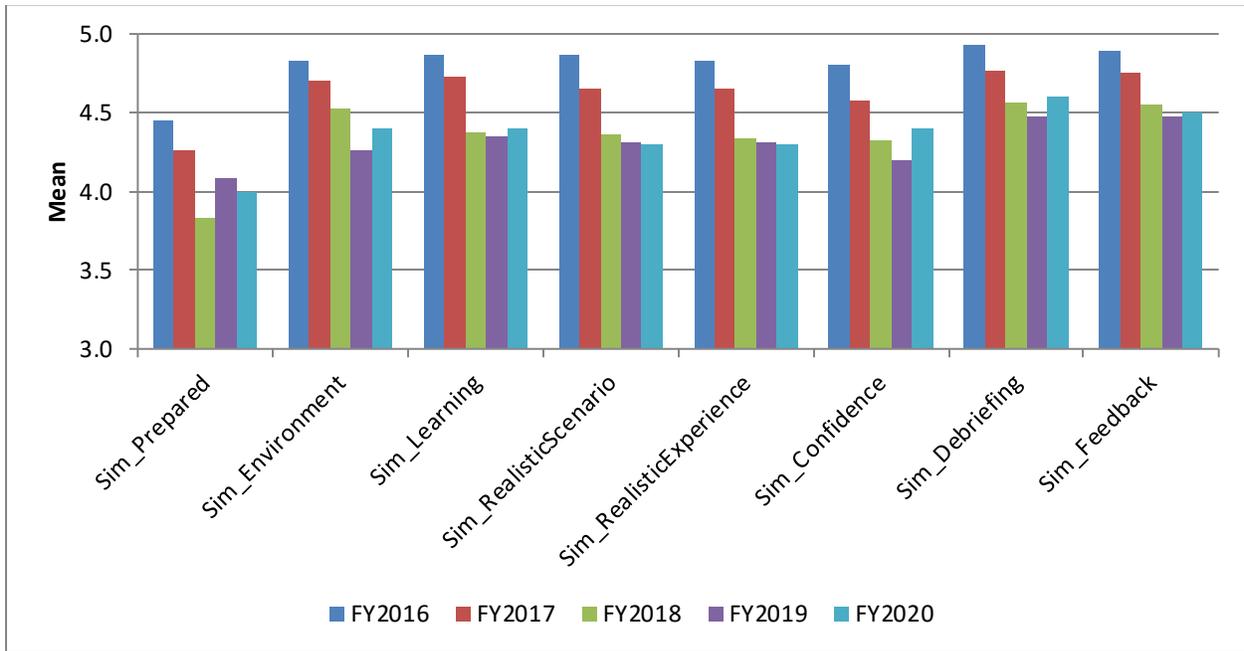


Table 3.3 Descriptive Statistics for Classroom, Simulation, and Overall Program Ratings

Variable name	Total questions in the survey	N	Mean	SD
Classroom Satisfaction	27	92	4.3	0.5
Simulation Satisfaction	8	89 ²⁷	4.4	0.6
Overall Program Satisfaction	2	91	4.4	0.8

Conclusion

Results from the post-training survey corroborate the satisfaction that trainees reported on the DEST. Across eight satisfaction items, trainees gave simulation training positive to very positive ratings. Trainees gave similar ratings to their classroom training as well. The significantly lower rating for feeling prepared for simulation training deserves attention. Simulation training is markedly different from the classroom training that precedes it. It is more emotionally demanding and places performance demands on trainees. The simulation training team has

²⁷ Two respondents who indicated that they did not participate in the simulation training before completing the survey were excluded from the analysis.

made efforts to help integrate classroom training and simulation training by developing a “life of the case” approach that tries to engage trainees in critical thinking about a hypothetical case that is carried over into simulation training. Nevertheless, it is possible that trainees’ classroom preparation for simulation training was inconsistent, leading some trainees to feel less prepared to begin simulation training. As discussed in Chapter 1, trainers are considering having simulation facilitators introduce themselves to the trainees in the classroom before the simulation training week, and plan to initiate meetings between classroom trainers and simulation facilitators. In Chapter 5, we discuss ideas for enhancing preparation.

Chapter 4: Post-Training Satisfaction Survey—Content Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

In addition to the Likert-scaled items discussed in the last chapter, the online post-training satisfaction survey includes open-ended items in which trainees can write comments in text. To date, there has been limited analysis of the trainees' comments, in which they report their impression of the training and offer recommendations for improvement. This chapter presents results of a content analysis of text responses to open-ended items that was completed in December 2019 on the post-training satisfaction survey data from February 2016 to April 2019. Additionally, DCFS provided an updated data set that included survey responses from February 2019 to February 2020 and comments in these data were analyzed separately.

Methods

In this chapter, we conducted a content analysis of the text responses to the two open-ended items on the post-training satisfaction survey: 1) "Comment on this experience" and 2) "Please add a few statements that summarize your experiences in the Simulation Labs to help us improve the scenarios." Some trainees indicated in the text response that they did not participate in the simulation training; therefore, we did not include those trainees in our analysis. Additionally, one open-ended item was added to the survey in February 2017 (the first one presented in the survey) and was not available to all survey respondents included in our analysis.

Each open-ended item was analyzed separately. One researcher (Dr. Laura Lee) first reviewed all the responses and created categories for each item. For the first item, four categories were created to match the distribution of themes across trainees: positive, positive with suggestions for improvement, negative, and miscellaneous. For the second item, three categories were created: positive, positive with suggestions for improvement, and negative. For the second item, the positive with suggestions for improvement category was further sorted into categories based on the nature of the suggestion: time, scenarios, instruction, acting, feedback, documentation, court, logistics, and miscellaneous. Using these categories, Dr. Lee coded each response and examined the frequency distributions. We also examined the responses by fiscal year. A second analysis by another researcher (Dr. Chiu) produced similar results.

Results

Excluding those who indicated that they did not participate in the simulation training, we had a total of 386 survey respondents. Respondents participated in simulation trainings at various dates between February 2016 and April 2019 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Responses by Fiscal Year

FY	N	%
2016	58	15.0
2017	96	24.9
2018	143	37.1
2019	89	23.1

4.1 Item 1: Comment on this experience

We analyzed text responses of 195 trainees who provided comments in response to this item. Survey responses could largely be categorized into three groups (Table 4.2): positive (57.4%), positive with suggestions for improvement (28.2%), and negative (10.3%). The miscellaneous group (4.1%) included those who commented only on the classroom portion of the training or had mixed feelings about the simulation training (e.g., “I felt it was very real, but a little over the top”).

Table 4.2. Content Analysis of First Open-Ended Item

Categories	N	%
Positive	112	57.4
Positive with suggestions for improvement	55	28.2
Negative	20	10.3
Miscellaneous	8	4.1

For more than half of the trainees who responded to this open-ended item, the simulation training was a positive experience. Some of the words used to describe this experience included: *practical, realistic, educational, valuable, and beneficial*. Here are examples of the positive comments, organized by training date:

- *I felt that my experience was very practical and realistic and assisted me in utilizing some of the skills I learned. It was helpful to watch my peers also so that I could identify areas that I saw as strengths and other areas I could work on (FY2017).*
- *I was very nervous about being in front of my peers but I felt supported enough to move past it. I think that everyone who intends to do investigations should have this experience, as it prepares you for walking into the unknown. The SIM lab also gives you an opportunity to make mistakes and to learn from them in an environment where no one is affected by it negatively (FY2017).*
- *The best thing about the simulation labs was that the trainers and actors gave me valuable feedback. They let me know what my strengths were and what areas I need to improve on (FY2018).*
- *The trainers gave important feedback that will help me become more knowledgeable about my job tasks (FY2018).*
- *I enjoyed my time in SIM lab. It gave me a more clear understanding of my duties as a Child Protection Specialist (FY2018).*
- *In the beginning of training, I had a major level of self-doubt in being able to complete the job and do it effectively. However, simulation eased majority of that self-doubt and I am more confident and competent in the field practice (FY2018).*
- *The SIM lab was an invaluable experience. I felt it depicted a typical DCFS family issues surrounding family dynamics (FY2018).*
- *I feel so fortunate to have been able to make use of the SIM lab during my training. To know that I could apply what I have learned for the first time to an almost real life situation was very comforting. I had a door slammed in my face, met resistance from the*

actors once I entered the home, was able to enter an unknown home and identify hazards, and got feedback from people who have many years of investigation experience (FY2018).

- *I feel the experience helped offer me a better understanding on how situations might be. It also helped me understand what changes I might need to make and what I am currently doing well already (FY2018).*
- *The trainer was very knowledgeable and respectful in regards to any areas that required improvement (FY2018).*
- *It doesn't matter how much time you spend in the classroom or how much reading of procedures you do, you don't really "get it" until you are knocking on that door and talking to the families (FY2018).*
- *I was nervous about the cameras, actors, and if I was going to do well. However, once I knocked on the door it was "game on." I forgot about everything and it all felt real. I tried my best and had gotten valuable feedback from the trainers as well as the actors (FY2018).*
- *This experience gave me confidence and made me feel like everything I have read really had a purpose. It was realistic and fun to practice (FY2018).*
- *I enjoyed the opportunity to practice what I learned (FY2019).*
- *Having the house and actors play out the roles was very helpful in seeing what kind of resistance or behaviors we would be seeing, but in an environment that was safe. Watching others' experience and feedback in the SIM lab was also helpful and it showed me how other people might do it, or other things that I might have said or done (FY2019).*

For about 30% of the trainees who responded to the first open-ended item, the simulation training was overall a positive experience and they volunteered suggestions to make the experience even better. By far, the trainees who volunteered suggestions found the simulation training to be beneficial and wished the training could be longer. Others felt that the simulation training should have a smaller class size. Some trainees felt that the classroom portion did not prepare them for the simulation training. They suggested that it would be helpful to have more time to prepare for the simulation training itself to ease some of the anxieties that came with it. Here are examples of the trainees' comments, organized by the training date:

- *I believe that more time could have been focused on the scenarios if my class training had not been so large. Some days I felt that my time in the simulation was rushed and experiences overcrowded (FY2017).*
- *I believe incorporating the SIM throughout the training would be even more beneficial as we would be able to learn and apply as we learn (FY2017).*
- *I really enjoyed the simulation experience. However, there were times when I felt some of the day's information was being rushed and shortened, which I felt took away from the learning experience (FY2018).*
- *Only wish was that there was more time for scene investigation, it felt rushed (FY2018).*
- *There needs to be more SIM training to go with the in-class training (FY2018).*

- *I wished we could have spent a bit more time preparing for simulations. I went in with very little confidence because I did not feel like the classroom setting prepared us for simulation (FY2018).*
- *We walked into that SIM house blind and not knowing exactly what we needed to do (FY2018).*
- *The only complaint would be on not being prepared before the simulation (FY2018).*
- *I feel for this portion of the training it should have a smaller class so that we can go through it more than once and also be able to watch our video to see what we did good and what we did wrong and where we could improve (FY2018)*
- *I learned so much in that week. I wish it could be longer than a week because that is where everything that was previously learned comes into play (FY2018).*
- *I didn't feel there was enough time and practice in the simulation lab. I felt either the experience should be longer or amount of people should be less (FY2019).*
- *I think it would be good to have more simulation during the six week training process...I'd like to see opportunities to do different types of simulations (FY2019).*
- *The only regret I have for the process is that we didn't have more time to participate, learn and grow as new investigators with the department (FY2019).*
- *The simulation and the actors were phenomenal. I wish we had more time to conduct different type of allegations while in simulation (FY2019).*

Approximately 10% of the trainees who responded to this open-ended item found the simulation training to be a negative experience. The trainees stated that they did not enjoy the experience and felt discouraged or intimidated. Here are some of the trainees' comments, organized by the training date:

- *I did not enjoy the training experience, because it was rushed, not structured, lacked respect and at most times insensitive and favored particular participants...It was difficult to understand because you would often receive conflicting answers to questions and directions that sometimes varies from trainer and assisting trainer (FY2018).*
- *During debriefing the assessors or supervisors need to provide both negative and positive feedback (FY2018).*
- *Several critical remarks were made which I didn't feel were necessary to a person placed in a new setting (FY2018).*
- *If anything, that experience lowered my confidence level (FY2018).*
- *Provide better training on preparation to the trainers. A lot of time was spent attempting to get the next lesson started. Overall, this training needed to be more organized especially the transition to the SIMS...The training environment at the region was horrific and distracting (FY2018).*
- *The debriefing felt punitive. I understand we need to know where our areas of weaknesses are however it's not what is being said it's how it is said. I did not feel prepared to do my job and felt as though I made a huge mistake taking this position in DCP (FY2018).*

- *The experience in the SIM lab was not beneficial to my learning, the actors were not cooperative with any part of the investigation and caused the environment to become very hostile (FY2018).*
- *The combativeness inside the SIM house was not helpful in learning how to explain the job that needed to be done (FY2018).*
- *SIM portion was very annoying at time (FY2019).*
- *I also felt a lack of cultural and diverse scenarios coming from Latino community and the class being majority of people of color (FY2019).*
- *I did not have the best experience interacting with SIM mainly because my confidence diminished, due to the feeling of being overwhelmed and intimidated (FY2019).*

4.2 Item 2: Please add a few statements that summarize your experiences in the Simulation Labs to help us improve the scenarios

We analyzed text responses of 317 trainees who provided comments to this item (82.1% of respondents). There were very few trainees (<2%) who indicated that the training experience was negative on this question (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Content Analysis of Second Open-Ended Item

Categories	N	%
Positive	121	38.2
Positive with suggestions for improvement	190	59.9
Negative	6	1.9

The majority (98.1%) of the trainees who responded to this item indicated that the experience was positive, with many trainees providing specific recommendations on how the training could improve. More than half of the trainees in this group felt they could have used more time in the simulation training while other trainees had recommendations in the following categories (Table 4.4): scenarios (12.6%), instruction (8.4%), acting (8.4%), feedback (4.7%), documentation (3.2%), court (3.2%), logistics (2.1%), and miscellaneous (3.7%). Examples of their comments are included in Table 4.4.

4.3 Updated content analysis of open-ended responses

DCFS provided updated data that included survey responses from February 2019 and February 2020. During this period, there were 92 survey respondents. We used the same qualitative analysis method to conduct a content analysis of two open-ended items and found the results to be similar. In regards to the first open-ended item (Comment on this experience), survey responses could largely be categorized into three groups: positive (67.8%), positive with suggestions for improvement (16.9%), and negative (10.2%). For the majority of trainees who responded to this open-ended item, the simulation training was a positive experience.

Additionally, most trainees (70.7%) provided comments in regards to the simulation training on the second open-ended item, which read, “Please add a few statements that summarize your experiences in the Simulation Labs to help us improve the scenarios.” We analyzed text

responses of 65 trainees who provided comments to this item. The majority (93.8%) of the trainees indicated that the experience was positive, with many trainees providing specific recommendations on how the training could be improved. We further analyzed these recommendations and found that specific recommendations were related to the following: time (34.3%), scenarios (8.6%), instruction (17.1%), acting (14.3%), feedback (8.6%), documentation (2.9%), and court (5.7%). By far, the trainees who volunteered suggestions wished the training could be longer. Appendix D provides more detailed information from this analysis, including the text of recommendations.

Table 4.4 Content Analysis of Second Open-Ended Item: Positive with Suggestions for Improvement

Category	Example	Trainees' Comment	n (%)
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer than a week • More simulation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Sim lab could have been longer. It was a good experience, but too short to provide adequate training for new investigators (FY2016).</i> • <i>The simulation experience is wonderful, although it was too short. This job is best learned "hands on." There is a lot of information to put into practice in just a week (four days; FY2018).</i> 	102 (53.7)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Simulation week was very instrumental in creating competence and confidence. I was really unsure about the how the information translates into practice. It would have been great to [include] different allegations investigations and more practice (FY2018).</i> • <i>We may need some diversity in the family. I feel that having people with different ethnic backgrounds as actors will help with increasing cultural competence for investigators (FY2018).</i> 	24 (12.6)
Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different allegations • New scenarios • Diversity 		

Table 4.4 Continued

Category	Example	Trainees' Comment	n (%)
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration by instructors More instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It may be helpful to have the students watch the knock on the door and then participate in doing so themselves (FY2018).</i> <i>During the engagement experience, it would be helpful to have a better understanding what we should be discussing when we first meet the family (FY2018).</i> 	16 (8.4)
Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not realistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I think the actors are a bit too much. I understand that they are setting up the worst case scenario, but at times the actors were being so out of hand that we could not get an experience doing work (FY2017).</i> <i>Actors should be as true to real life as possible. Please don't be worried about hurting our feelings. We need to develop good engagement and interviewing skills with difficult and resistant people (FY2016).</i> 	16 (8.4)
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to watch the video and learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I wish we could have went over the video made when we knocked on the door. I felt we should have seen our mistakes on video (FY2018).</i> <i>It would be nice to see how we did by viewing a video of ourselves so we could also see the mistakes we made (FY2018).</i> 	9 (4.7)
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to practice documenting notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I believe that documenting notes as if it was a real case would be beneficial (FY2019).</i> <i>I enjoyed the entire experience, however I felt it would be more beneficial to work on documentation (FY2019).</i> 	6 (3.2)

Table 4.4 Continued

Category	Example	Trainees' Comment	n (%)
Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add cross examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think the scenarios were awesome and I wouldn't change a thing. The only thing I would add is in the court scenario. I would add a cross examination to show how rough court scene can really get (FY2019).</i> • <i>I do think it would be helpful if the information throughout the case stayed the same for the courtroom simulation. It was a little confusing testifying with many different parts of the investigation that were different (FY2017).</i> 	6 (3.2)
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom next to simulation training • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think building a classroom next or in the simulation home would help future trainees. Have the lessons taught in that class and then go into the home to reenact the lessons that were just learned (FY2016).</i> 	4 (2.1)
Miscellaneous		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think scene re-enactment simulations may be more effective and more of learning experience if done individually, rather than in pairs (FY2018).</i> 	7 (3.7)

Conclusion

Just as we saw with the DEST rating and comments and the post-training satisfaction scores, trainees completing the open-ended items on the post-training survey provided very positive feedback for the simulation training program. They reported that the training provided realistic simulation and increased their knowledge about what they will face in the field. They described positive emotional effects on increasing confidence and decreasing self-doubt.

Their suggestions in many ways echoed those dating from the very first evaluation report on simulation training. Several trainees wanted more time for simulation training, whether time in an individual simulation or number of days or weeks in the simulation training experience. Some trainees described difficulty feeling prepared for simulation training. This is a finding that matches what we reported in the last chapter. Feeling prepared for simulation training received lower satisfaction scores on average than other satisfaction items about simulation training. This underlines the potential value of finding additional ways to help prepare trainees during the classroom training that precedes the simulation week. The wishes regarding the race-

ethnicity of the actors echoes similar comments reported in Chapter 2. Dealing with issues of diversity is an area in which the simulation training team should put additional effort.

The percentage of trainees who had a negative experience was small but merits attention. What some of these dissatisfied participants emphasized was the emotional conflict that arose in the training. Any simulation of a child protection investigation may need to deal with emotional conflict, which may be necessary for a true simulation of the difficult nature of such investigations. But the simulation training team should be aware that a small number of trainees are at risk for an experience that they find strikingly negative, and be prepared for this possibility. We wonder if these negative experiences are tied to part of the program's theory regarding its impact: that one effect of simulation training is to help those trainees who are not suited to a career in child protection realize their limitations. Do such trainees have negative experiences of simulations? Further research could examine the sequelae for trainees who had a negative experience, and whether and/or how it affects their decision regarding their career.

Chapter 5: Report Conclusion and Recommendations

The simulation training program underwent a significant transition in FY2020. The new Chicago laboratory had just opened in Spring 2019, and the program devoted considerable attention to developing the Chicago program, and to hiring and training new facilitators for Chicago. By October 2019 new simulation facilitators were leading simulation trainings in Chicago. The Child Protection Training Academy also developed and piloted a simulation training for a new category of DCFS workers: seasoned investigators and investigation supervisors. In the spring of 2020, just at the point that CPTA was preparing to implement simulation training for all DCFS investigators over a period of two years, the COVID-19 crisis hit the country and it was no longer safe to gather for in-person simulation trainings. CPTA adapted by developing and piloting Problem-Based Learning online for supervisors. More transition is imminent as DCFS and UIS begin to develop a new simulation laboratory in the Southern region in FY2021 and another laboratory in the Northern region the next year. Our hope is that program evaluation can help the simulation training partners identify needs and adapt successfully during this time of transition.

Despite all this transition, the news on simulation training remains positive. On the multiple indices measured in this program evaluation, simulation training continued to receive very positive feedback. The implementation evaluation substudy provided evidence that simulation training had successfully been replicated in Chicago. The DEST scores showed increased confidence for trainees over the course of the simulation training week and comments on the DEST also communicated trainees' positive experience. Increases in trainees' confidence on the DEST was substantially consistent over 21 different trainings during the course of the year, including both Springfield and Chicago trainings. Scores on the post-training satisfaction survey were high and comments were positive by a wide margin as well. The satisfaction scores were at the same high level as satisfaction scores from the previous two years, though not as high as scores in the first two years when simulation training was a new innovation rather than established practice. Thus trainees value simulation training highly and report increases in their skills as a result of the training. This has been a consistent finding throughout the history of the program. Another consistent finding is that trainees continue to want more simulation training, both more time devoted to doing simulation and wider application of the program.

As this report illustrates, to maintain its quality, the simulation training program has needed to address a number of challenges. Moreover, we anticipate that the program will continue to evolve to meet the needs of trainees. Below we discuss a number of recommendations we have developed in response to the data in this year's program evaluation.

Recommendations

5.1 Developing Effective Simulation Trainers/Facilitators

Our previous evaluation reports emphasized how central the abilities of the simulation trainer were to the success of the UIS program.²⁸ Chapter 1 of this report shows that facilitators and

²⁸ Chiu & Cross, *ibid.*; Cross, T.P., Tittle, G. & Chiu, Y. (2017). *Program evaluation of simulation training for new DCFS investigators: Initial report*. Children and Family Research Center, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

trainers are also central to the effectiveness of the Chicago laboratory. The work of a simulation trainer/facilitator demands deep understanding of experiential learning and simulation training design, child protection work and procedures, and PBL process. It requires ability to engage and prepare trainees and actors, to model and coach, and to debrief effectively. The facilitators do have a somewhat smaller role in Chicago than in Springfield because the courtroom simulation is run by the DCFS legal team. Nevertheless, the management, coordination and teaching roles of the simulation trainer is substantial. Having facilitators with the right blend of skills is key to the success of the training. Our findings underline the importance of hiring capable facilitators, providing them the best onboarding possible, and training and supporting them thoroughly.

Preparing new simulation facilitators rapidly required considerable effort in the implementation of the Chicago laboratory. Given the importance of facilitators combined with the difficulty of finding some with direct experience in investigation, an effective Training of Trainers (ToT) program is necessary. Developing a well-prepared training staff can have a beneficial cascade effect, because a skilled trainer cannot only teach numerous trainees, but also pass on training knowledge and skills to new trainers.²⁹ With the expansion of simulation training, the UIS trainers have been serving a dual role as a facilitator to newly hired DCFS investigators and a trainer of simulation facilitators, actors, and courtroom professionals. The development of new laboratories and the expansion of simulation training to new categories of professionals within existing laboratories may strain the capacity of UIS trainers. Effective ToT is therefore doubly important now. As the simulation program expands, we recommend enhancing the hiring, onboarding, and training of new facilitators; and investing in the development of facilitators into trainers. Intensive onboarding and ToT processes that parallel the simulation training model would create buy-in from new staff as well as producing competent and confident facilitators. A lengthy onboarding process might seem like a luxury; yet, it could actually be cost effective, since well-prepared trainers will be a great asset to DCFS for years and can train thousands of staff. Given the substantial and growing need for qualified simulation trainers/facilitators, we recommend that DCFS and its partner organization take very active steps to develop a cadre of qualified simulation facilitators/trainers. Below are ideas to explore.

Identifying Talent. Mormina and Pinder (2018) specify identifying talent as the first step in an effective ToT program.³⁰ The simulation training program could proactively identify individuals who might be groomed to be successful simulation facilitators. One source of candidates might be alumni of the current program of training investigators. They have first-hand experience of simulation training from being trainees, and within a few years, they will develop experience as investigators. Even committed investigators often look for next steps in their career. If becoming a simulation facilitator could be developed as an attractive career path, with compensation and working conditions to match, the simulation training program could increase its talent pool for new facilitators.

²⁹ Baron, N. (2006). The 'TOT': a global approach for the training of trainers for psychosocial and mental health interventions in countries affected by war, violence and natural disasters. *Intervention*, 4(2), 109-126.; Mormina, M., & Pinder, S. (2018). A conceptual framework for training of trainers (ToT) interventions in global health. *Globalization and Health*, 14, 1-11.

³⁰ Mormina & Pinder, *ibid*

The simulation training program could take steps to maintain contact with and nurture future trainers. It could offer internships to observe and perhaps assist with simulation training, and keep prospective trainers engaged by offering them refresher or advanced simulations, with continuing education credits available if possible. It could maintain a program of maintaining contact with alumni through regular electronic newsletter and online events such as webinars. Developing mentorships between current and prospective training staff may help promote the development of new trainers as well.

Developing ToT knowledge. Research literature on simulation training in child welfare is developing.³¹ However, we are aware of no studies of ToT related to simulation training in child protection. We recommend that the partner organizations collaborate with the Children and Family Research Center (CFRC) program evaluators to design evaluation research to study the ToT process in the simulation training program. Qualitative and quantitative methods could be used to collect data on fledgling facilitators' experience of ToT. Observational, interview or survey data could be used to study recruiting and onboarding, and data on new trainers' responses in training exercises could be collected and analyzed. Research methods used to study simulation training could be adapted to study ToT. Program evaluation could provide data to help maintain the quality of ToT and inform efforts to improve ToT. One important step would be to develop a logic model and theory of change that describe the process of recruiting, onboarding and training new facilitators.

5.2 Simulation Training and Diversity

It is worthwhile to consider further the comments of trainees who said that they would value doing simulations with African-American and Latino actors. There were also comments on the post-training survey related to diversity. These comments suggest that it may be valuable for the program to explore further ways to address the racial-ethnic diversity of the child welfare population. Some research suggests the existence of racial bias in child welfare decision-making indicating the value of dealing with this issue more in training.³²

5.3 Enhancing the Preparedness of Trainees for Simulation Training

Ever since program evaluators started analyzing the post-training satisfaction survey data, trainees have consistently given somewhat lower satisfaction scores to the question 'I felt prepared to participate in the SIM lab.' On average, trainees agree with this statement rather than strongly agree, and 21.8% of trainees either disagreed or were undecided. For the first time this year, we have reported comments volunteered by trainees in which they specifically mentioned this issue. The simulation training program may benefit from added efforts to prepare trainees prior to beginning simulation training. The simulation training program is aware of this issue. The "life of the case" model, when simulation training was first developed, was one effort to integrate classroom training and simulation training. Currently trainers are considering having simulation facilitators introduce themselves to the trainees in the classroom

³¹ See, e.g., Bogo, M., Shlonsky, A. Lee, B. & Serbinki, S. (2014) Acting like it matters: A scoping review of simulations in child welfare training. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 8, 70-93.

³² See, e.g., Dettlaff, A. J., Rivaux, S. L., Baumann, D. J., Fluke, J. D., Rycraft, J. R., & James, J. (2011). Disentangling substantiation: The influence of race, income, and risk on the substantiation decision in child welfare. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 1630–1637.

before the simulation training week, and plan to initiate meetings between classroom trainers and simulation facilitators.

There is an inherent challenge in helping trainees feel prepared for simulation training. The experience seems to be dramatically different from classroom training. It engages multiple senses and brain functions in a way that classroom training can match, and it also calls on trainees actually to exercise their nascent skills. This contrast probably helps account for simulation training's popularity, but it also may be emotionally challenging for some trainees. Nevertheless, additional steps could be tried to help trainees feel prepared. They could observe simulations live or on video during the classroom training. It might also be reassuring to meet with a recent trainee who can explain to them what the experience was like and provide tips on how to cope with it. If time permits, more short experiential learning exercises could be introduced via role play in the classroom.

5.4 Trainees Who Have a Negative Experience with Simulation Training

While the vast majority of trainees have a positive experience with simulation training, a small percentage have a negative experience. Approximately 10% of the trainees who responded to an open-ended item on the post-training survey found the simulation training to be a negative experience. That does not mean that 10% of trainees overall had a negative experience, since not all trainees completed the post-training satisfaction survey and even those who did complete the survey did not always provide text for the open-ended question. Regardless of the actual percentage among all trainees, the number is large enough to merit some discussion and potentially a response by the simulation training program. We recommend that the program learn more about trainees who have a negative experience of the program. The program may want to encourage dissatisfied trainees to provide additional feedback on their experience. The program could explain to trainees that occasionally a trainee does not experience simulation training as helpful and the program would like to know about it. Some trainees with negative experience may feel comfortable having confidential exit interviews in which they share their feedback on the program. The interview could potentially help the trainee make sense of the experience and find a training experience that would work better for them.

One hypothesis about the simulation training program is that it will help trainees who are not suited to do child protective investigations discover that truth before they enter the field. One possibility is that those trainees who have a negative simulation experience may also struggle in the field. We recommend that the program take steps to tabulate how many graduates of simulation training do not continue in child protection, and assess whether a negative simulation experience contributed to their decision. A substudy on the careers of program graduates might be a useful component in an upcoming program evaluation plan.

Evaluation Plans for FY2021

Program evaluation of the simulation training program for FY2021 employ a variety of methods and adapt to changes in the program. The post-training survey and DEST are established methods that will continue to be implemented. Minor revisions have been made to the DEST to yield DEST 3.0. In the last two months of FY2020, the Child Protection Training Academy has

developed Problem-Based Learning Online to provide relevant training online in response to the Covid-19 virus, which made in-person simulation training impossible. The program evaluation team at CFRC is currently developing an online survey to accompany PBL online training, and anticipates implementing these methods in FY2021. There have been recent inquiries from the legislature about the effect of simulation training on employee turnover, and we anticipate conducting an updated turnover analysis similar to one the evaluation team conducted in FY2018 and FY2019. We anticipate the launching of the simulation training laboratory in the Southern region by the end of FY2021, and the evaluation team anticipates developing an implementation evaluation for this new extension of the model. Finally, the evaluation team is planning an analysis of the relationship between simulation training and child maltreatment re-reports, by looking at re-reports in the caseloads of sim-trained and non-sim-trained investigators, using DCFS SACWIS client data.

Conclusion

The simulation training program enjoys considerable support from trainees and stakeholders and is expanding rapidly. Program evaluation data have contributed to the program's growth and can help shape and improve the future development of the program. The demand for more simulation training and the need to address a wide variety of training needs in an environment challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic and social ills will challenge the simulation training program. The simulation training program and the three partners (UIS, DCFS, UIUC) collaborating have an opportunity to adapt to new demands and increase the promise of simulation training.

Appendix A: Interview Protocols of Chicago Implementation Evaluation

- Simulation training administrators and program developers:
 1. Please describe your role in the simulation training program.
 2. Please describe the process of developing or adapting the simulation training for the Chicago site.
 3. Please describe the adaptation and implementation of the following elements of simulation training and discuss the rationale for your choices in each area.
 - 1) Design of the simulation training, including the training materials
 - 2) Mock house and courtroom
 - 3) The simulation trainers/facilitators
 - 4) The recruitment and use of the actors
 - 5) The recruitment and use of the professionals in courtroom simulation
 - 6) The design of the simulations
 - 7) Problem-based learning
 4. What factors facilitated the adaptation of the simulation training in the Chicago site?
 5. What obstacles did you need to overcome?
 6. What differences are there between the simulation training in the Springfield and the Chicago sites?
 7. What role does simulation training play in DCFS overall training effort?
 8. What plans does DCFS have for simulation training?
 9. What is needed to sustain simulation training and develop it further?
- Simulation facilitators and classroom trainers
 1. Please describe your role in the simulation training program of the Chicago site. (Make sure to ask about their background and related experience)
 2. Please describe the process of developing or adapting the simulation training for the Chicago site. (Make sure to ask how they were prepared or trained to be a simulation training facilitator.)
 3. What factors facilitated the adaptation of the simulation training for the Chicago site? (What helped the Chicago site adapt the simulation training?)
 4. In your opinion, is there any difference between the simulation training in the Springfield and Chicago sites? How?
 5. Please describe the learning process for each day of the simulation training?
 6. What methods do you use to facilitate the learning process?
 7. What methods do you use to help trainees' build their competence?
 8. What role does simulation training play in DCFS overall training effort?
 9. In your observation, in what ways is the program successful? What are growth areas that need further work?
- Actors/Professionals
 1. Please describe your role in the simulation training program of the Chicago site.
 2. How were you recruited to be in the simulation training in the Chicago site? (Make sure to ask how many times they have been the simulation training.)

3. Please describe your background or training in relation to this role. (Make sure to ask whether there is a training or orientation about the simulation training before they were on board)
4. How do you work with the simulation trainer?
5. How do you interact with trainees during the training? What are you trying to accomplish in your interactions with trainees?
6. In your observation, how does the simulation training change trainees' knowledge, skills, confidence, and commitment during the week?
7. In your observation, in what ways is the program successful? What are areas that need further work?

Appendix B: Daily Experience of Simulation Training (DEST) Measure

Monday Morning Monday Afternoon Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

- At which site are you taking the training? Chicago Springfield
- With (1) being lowest and (7) being highest, please check the appropriate number to indicate your level of confidence in the following skill areas TODAY.

	(1) Low	(2)	(3)	(4) Moderate	(5)	(6)	(7) High
Gather info from collateral contacts	<input type="radio"/>						
Think critically on facts vs. hypotheses	<input type="radio"/>						
Engage families	<input type="radio"/>						
Assess safety	<input type="radio"/>						
Integrate compassion and investigative skill	<input type="radio"/>						
Address any concerns about family statements and behaviors	<input type="radio"/>						
Identify family strengths	<input type="radio"/>						
Explain need for safety plan and/or protective custody	<input type="radio"/>						
Explain DCFS role and expectations for keeping children safe	<input type="radio"/>						
Answer pointed questions from parents and caregivers	<input type="radio"/>						
Address underlying conditions such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, developmental disabilities	<input type="radio"/>						
Testify in court	<input type="radio"/>						
Work as a DCFS investigator	<input type="radio"/>						

- Please answer the following questions regarding the feedback that you received in **today's training**:

	very helpful	helpful	not helpful	very unhelpful	N/A
I found the classroom trainer's feedback to be...	<input type="radio"/>				
I found the simulation trainer's feedback to be...	<input type="radio"/>				
I found the actor who played the "Mother Figure" feedback to...	<input type="radio"/>				
I found the "Paramour Figure (Father, boyfriend, partner)" actor's feedback to be...	<input type="radio"/>				
I found the "Other Adult Caregiver in the Home" actor's feedback to be...	<input type="radio"/>				

- **Today's reflective log:** What were the most meaningful concepts or skills you learned today?

Appendix C: Verbatim Quotations of DEST Reflective Log

Reflective log question: What were the most meaningful concepts or skills you learned today?

- **Monday activities: Calling the reporter, and PBL debriefing (N=119)**

Theme	n	Examples of Verbatim Quotations
Skills for calling the reporter	58	<p><i>It was helpful as we broke down the first steps in a case and formulated good questions for the reporter.</i></p> <p><i>Brainstorming as a group and having a discussion on what to ask reporter</i></p> <p><i>Clarifying and probing the reporter and how to explain why we are calling and asking the same things the reporter already gave to the hotline.</i></p> <p><i>What questions to be asking when calling a reporter and how to interact with the caller. Classroom training was very unorganized and info changed often. Also did not always match with the agency policies. Appeared to be unclear about a lot of the requirements of what a CPI should be doing now as opposed to years ago.</i></p> <p><i>I believe the questions should have been pertaining to the [calling the reporter] activity, not me assuming I am capable of doing the activities and I didn't engage with the family.</i></p>
The Problem-Based Learning method	38	<p><i>I enjoyed going through the actual report and then breaking down the different steps as in what questions you'd want to ask, our hunches and hypotheses, the next steps and then writing down the different statements versus facts we got from the conversation with our reporter. The way everything is being taught too is less confusing than it was in the training we had a few weeks ago.</i></p> <p><i>I personally found Problem Based Learning (PBL) helpful because it gives me a chance to break down my hunches/hypothesis and statements/observations.</i></p> <p><i>I leaned how to eliminate bias, even on the small concepts. I am able to identify the facts of the case a little better than previously.</i></p>
Benefits of working with trainers	9	<p><i>I also found sharing feedback among classmates and trainers were very helpful. I was able to utilize what I have learned in classroom setting into practice.</i></p> <p><i>I started extremely nervous however after speaking with our trainers I am beginning to relax. I am looking forward to completing this week.</i></p>

- Tuesday: Knock on the door (N=134)

Theme	n	Examples of Verbatim Quotations
Skills for engaging the family	47	<p><i>To continue to be engaged with families and take time to listen to them and being attentive. To also continue to keep a calm demeanor about myself as it will help the families I am working with and also help them to remain calm.</i></p> <p><i>I also learned I need to not rush and go with the flow more and not be so rigid with my checklist of things to ask about in a particular order. Also, to continue to be mindful about the dynamics of the relationships in the home and continue to show respect throughout the process.</i></p> <p><i>Today I learned to be honest in my responses to families involved with the department in attempts to gain their trust.</i></p> <p><i>I learned how to engage the family and to pick up on cues that was given. I learned that while engaging the family you answer questions that come up and you bring the family back to the task at hand.</i></p> <p><i>I learned that Engagement skills are critical in connecting with clients. It's important that we stay focused on empathy and the matter at hand. I also learned that we must keep certain documents for the investigators eyes only sharing only small safe amounts with the client.</i></p> <p><i>Be aware that our definition of something may be different than the family's definition, for example Safety.</i></p>
Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others	41	<p><i>The feedback from the SIMS training was very helpful. It helped me to recognize the pace I was going in order to ask the obvious questions. The feedback to be upfront and direct about the allegations to the caregivers is their right and to own the interviewing process</i></p> <p><i>I also thought resistance of the actors was helpful to prepare what could potentially happen. Plus, listening to other classmates' feedback from both the trainers and actors were helpful.</i></p> <p><i>I expected the feedback from my trainers but I really enjoyed the feedback from the actors as well. They were able to express the experience of the client and feedback from that angle is always necessary. It ultimately helps you learn how to communicate with your future clients more effectively.</i></p> <p><i>I found the feedback from the simulation trainer to be the most helpful. BECAUSE she does not know me, nor has she developed a relationship through the training process her feedback felt more realistic and genuine. She was able to point out specific areas of concern and strengths in my simulation process.</i></p>

<p>Greater self-awareness</p>	<p>38</p>	<p><i>I am a high energy person and tend to speed talk a lot. I will work on thinking about it more in the moment to make sure the client is able to understand what I am saying and follow the conversation.</i></p> <p><i>Being aware of my physical interaction, so that it doesn't appear threatening or intimidating to the family that I am interviewing.</i></p> <p><i>I need to be aware of my facial expressions or other non-verbal cues when interacting with others/parents.</i></p> <p><i>Learning to slow down and realizing I need help learning to clarify the process and procedure to the clients.</i></p> <p><i>I learned to lay aside my own personal biases, and be fair to the family being interviewed..</i></p> <p><i>I learned something about my method of engagement which worked well in my previous job but does not work as well in my role as child protection specialist.</i></p> <p><i>Doing today's simulation gave me insight as to how I should approach triggers and first-time contacts.</i></p>
<p>How to explain the DCFS role</p>	<p>12</p>	<p><i>I learned I need to work explaining the process of the investigation and why I am in the home right away and more effectively.</i></p> <p><i>Be upfront with the reason that you are coming to the home so the family doesn't feel as if you are being misleading about why you are there.</i></p> <p><i>Procedure is a must know so that you can explain why your doing what your doing.</i></p> <p><i>how to answer the question, "are you going to take my kids?", in an honest manner that doesn't have parents questioning the meaning behind it.</i></p> <p><i>Making sure the family understand the purpose of the visit and how this impacts them. To check in with the family about the reason of my visit and my/DCFS role.</i></p>

- **Wednesday: Scene investigation and supervision simulation (N=106)**

Theme	n	Examples of Verbatim Quotations
Skills for conducting a safety assessment	41	<p><i>I need to be in the moment even if the situation presents lots of information at one time. I need to create the picture of the scene like a story in a book being read for my supervisor as if he/she was there. I need to document everything I tell the family that needs to be changed/removed/adjusted just in case that eventually goes back to what it was and becomes another hotline call for something else. I need to get a timeline for each mark/bruise/cut seen. Pictures of the environment close up, mid-way, and of the full room are needed for scenes with environmental concerns. Photographs of all the marks with descriptions of the size and color should be given, but a guess on how old a mark is cannot be given. I can ask when something might have occurred, but it still may not be accurate. I should not make assumptions and should talk to everyone and collect all the evidence before thinking I have the answer; they remain hypotheses until all evidence is collected.</i></p> <p><i>Do a thorough assessment and be diligent in observing the scene so that we won't miss any important details that may be helpful with the investigation.</i></p> <p><i>How to stay on track and identify safety hazards and use it as teaching moment but also as part of identifying safety issues.</i></p> <p><i>Be observant of my surroundings. Be understanding that the investigation process can be intrusive and comfortable.</i></p> <p><i>Scene investigation process (5 matrix coverage) following up procedures 300.60 and including procedures 300.90 when involving children ages 6 and younger. Difference between Safety assessment, safety Threats, and accurate finding. Challenges of frontline/first responder when gathering information, covering all parts of scene investigation and home environment assessment in short time and processing all at the same time. Importance of reviewing and using appendix G to complete CERAP.</i></p> <p><i>Today was helpful of completing the body chart and getting the necessary information required. The scene investigation I would have liked to be able to do individually, or have role played so that I can see if I was able to document all of the concerns and what I may have missed. I would like to also do scene reenactment individually as well so I can develop the skills and make mistakes to learn from and obtain helpful feedback.</i></p>
Knowledge about their	31	<p><i>During the simulation, we were put on pause and asked about different situations. We were then provided the opportunity to take</i></p>

<p>behavior from feedback from others</p>		<p><i>the suggestion and implement it into our experience. I appreciated the feedback and the opportunity to follow through with the information provided. I also found the supervision helpful based upon the information provided. I believe it provided a safe place to become aware of things that I missed, that needed to be completed or observed and ones that may not be as significant. The questions asked and input provided were very helpful.</i></p> <p><i>Most meaningful concept is having the trainers coach us during scene investigations. Trainers provided different techniques, and what to be aware of within the home.</i></p> <p><i>It was helpful to have live, situational training with immediate feedback and suggestions. The experience helped to alleviate some of the nervousness and anxiety.</i></p> <p><i>[A simulation trainer's] order [...] really made sense and made it easier to gather our information. I would love to do this experience once a year while in my career as an investigator. I would recommend having supervisors and "seasoned" workers also complete sims training. There is a huge disconnect between policy and practice in each office. It is very hard to disconnect the two.</i></p>
<p>Skills for engaging with family or identifying family strengths</p>	<p>21</p>	<p><i>[...] how important it is to point out the family's strengths along the way to keep them engaged and open to communicate as much as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Addressing the ability to negotiate and engage the parents and trying to get them to allow the investigator to visually conduct and document all injuries on the minor's body and have the parent sign the body chart.</i></p> <p><i>I learned how to be a bit more compassionate and guiding when going through the home safety checklist with families, and to be more cognizant of recognizing strengths of the family, and sharing those with the family.</i></p>
<p>How to address concerns with families and explain the investigation process</p>	<p>20</p>	<p><i>Being able to have crucial and educational conversations with parents/caregivers and addressing safety threats right at the moment.</i></p> <p><i>Family could be resistant and if the parent is reluctant to show the child's body nicely ask and explain to the parent you observing and taking pictures is necessary. Always assess for the four underlying conditions.</i></p> <p><i>When the caregiver provides information relating to domestic violence, know when or how to address it in the absence of the perpetrator.</i></p>

		<i>Procedure is a must know so that you can explain why you're doing what you're doing.</i>
Greater self-awareness	15	<i>It's okay to be nervous until you find the style that works best for you. Be upfront with the reason that you are coming to the home so the family doesn't feel as if you are being misleading about why you are there. I found out the areas I need to work on. I realized I could be more observant on some issues. I learned when it will be a good time to press on certain issues and address other issues at a later time.</i>

- **Thursday: Interview parents and medical simulation (N=114)**

Theme	n	Examples of Verbatim Quotations
How to answer pointed questions from parents and explain the need for protective custody	44	<p><i>Following up and interviewing with parents who can be aggressive. Interviewing parents and answering the relevant questions to the investigation. Giving parents options and allowing parents to mitigate.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewing "alleged mother and father" were beneficial with other classmates especially we could pause to come up with more appropriate questions. I learnt that it is okay to ask direct questions time to time and that does not always intimidating the parents.</i></p> <p><i>How to identify silent cues.</i></p> <p><i>I learned that you cannot be afraid to be direct with some of the harder questions you have to ask parents. I also learned that you can be firm and assertive when creating a safety plan because you have to make sure the kids are safe.</i></p> <p><i>The most meaningful skill I learned today was how to question the caregiver to rule out protective custody. I learned how to build a rapport and engage the mother; the mother provided vital information pertaining to the abuse and neglect of Oliver and Sarah.</i></p> <p><i>I was particularly learned more about the CERAP and specifically how to address she safety threat. We broke down each safety threat and how it pertained to the entire case.</i></p> <p><i>Practice using CERAP, need to use concrete examples to justify any yes answers; importance of being direct with parents- offering full disclosure when having difficult conversations.</i></p> <p><i>This simulation experience was different than the previous days. The tag team version of interviewing the parents was not, in my opinion, the best way to get the information needed. It would be more</i></p>

		<i>beneficial to interview the parents in a one on one style or in a more direct and focused manner.</i>
How to prepare for court	21	<p><i>The court testimony walk through was very beneficial to identify the key components of testimony and the court procedure.</i></p> <p><i>Court testimony training should be added to the CWEL training as well. It was helpful to have an expert explain the court process.</i></p> <p><i>Having an attorney come in to talk about the court proceedings. The attorney was very knowledgeable about how Cook county works, how the central counties work, and how the down state counties work.</i></p>
How to gather info from collateral contacts (Medical simulation)	17	<p><i>I felt like I was really in a hospital Emergency Room. [...] I feel better as the days go on and feel that I am growing in my skill level.</i></p> <p><i>Speaking to the doctors. It was great getting to what information is relevant about the family.</i></p> <p><i>Understanding the questions to ask the doctor and understanding the replies.</i></p>
Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others	14	<p><i>Shout out to [two simulation trainers] for giving me good feedback and a springboard on where I should go in interviewing, the importance of staying on target to get what you need!!</i></p> <p><i>The supervision time after simulation needs to be available for everyone. The time should be managed by the trainer so everyone gets a chance to debrief.</i></p> <p><i>I believe we did not received feedback from the actors, though I felt it could be helpful to hear from their perspective of the interview. During this simulation, I felt it was distracting to have an audience, though helpful to witness others conduct the interview. Also, my anxiousness may have been heighten, as I felt the anxiety/eagerness within the room, which impacted my ability to focus on the interview and the need to address certain concerns. I would suggest having an interview within a separate room with camera/microphone for classroom to observe, and the interviewer still has the option to "phone a friend" or "tap out".</i></p> <p><i>I am still struggling with finding a balance with what this simulation trainers are conveying as being appropriate practice and what is found in policy and procedure, especially for someone where home office is contradicting what is being learned.</i></p>

- Friday: courtroom simulation (N=140)

Theme	n	Examples of Verbatim Quotations
How to testify and understand the court process	92	<p><i>Court preparation is a great part of simulation. Even though I have testified many times, it is different for each job I have had. Good information was provided and the feedback from Amy and the court personnel was great.</i></p> <p><i>Learning the do's and don'ts of court testimony. Listening carefully and stating to and verifying the facts. Always remain confident and competent!</i></p> <p><i>How to articulate or describe the situation or action. To be able to be short and concise. The feedback was great and very useful. Another skills is to focus on the questions being asked. Be more descriptive when necessary and unbiased. First time testifying in child welfare, and it was very good experience.</i></p> <p><i>The importance of using clients' own words in testimony, looking at the judge when responding, being more descriptive and avoiding too many hand gestures. Also avoid saying I feel, I think, I believe, I assume & I guess.</i></p> <p><i>It was very beneficial to learn how attorneys will ask us questions and the best way to answer them. It was beneficial being in a real courtroom with real court personnel.</i></p> <p><i>Practicing to implement how to participate and testify in court when I have never testified like this.</i></p> <p><i>In the courtroom I learned how to ignore distractions and to pause when a distraction was going to overshadow what I was testifying too.</i></p>
Knowledge about their behavior from feedback from others	32	<p><i>Court professional and trainers' feedback was very helpful.</i></p> <p><i>Although, this is the first time I testified learning the experience is imperative and hearing the feedback. The most meaningful concepts was that learning to testify in court and being confident and contempt in the information that I am giving.</i></p> <p><i>Everything was helpful. The actors were great and professional that provided great insight as to what the real world would be like when we actually do go out in the field.</i></p> <p><i>I appreciate court testimony however I feel there was a disconnection between scene investigation and court testimony. I feel like we were rushed through scene investigation and were not able to obtain important information to be able to testify to correct information. Due to the disconnection I believe the feedback from lawyers/ judge was</i></p>

		<p><i>not correct because we were not able to conduct a thorough investigation.</i></p> <p><i>Today I learned that you can expect that you may have to state "Why is the DCFS taking protective custody?" question any time during the sequential testimony rather than at the end or the beginning. I was advised before the court testimony session that I would only be answering yes or no questions but as it turns out I got "the question" -- when I was on the stand having taken it in the middle of the group--- I had not prepared adequately to answer that again because I did not think it would be presented during my turn at the bat --</i></p>
Feeling confident or prepared	19	<p><i>After today's simulation, I feel much better about testifying in court and feel that I will be more prepared when my first testimony presents itself.</i></p> <p><i>I think overall, after completing this week in sims, I am much more confident in working as a DCFS investigator. I obviously still am not an expert however this sim week has boosted my confidence level to complete my job as an investigator.</i></p> <p><i>The court experience really prepared me for testifying as a child protection specialist. I valued the feedback from the instructors and would apply it to my job duties.</i></p>
Greater self-awareness	15	<p><i>Being confident in testifying and looking at the judge when testifying. Being able to identify who provided the information to me.</i></p> <p><i>Court testimony-responding in complete sentences. Being descriptive. Do not use pronouns. Watch poker face.</i></p> <p><i>Keeping a poker face during testimony, avoid distractions during testimony, answer questions clearly and be descriptive with details or observations.</i></p> <p><i>I learned in the simulation today that I need to focus on presenting the more serious allegations first when giving my elevator speech. I need to speak louder in court. I need to clearly be able to state why protective custody was taken when on the stand.</i></p>

Appendix D: Content Analysis of Open-ended Responses to Post-Training Satisfaction Survey, February 2019 – February 2020

Item 1: Comment on this experience

Excluding those who indicated that they did not participate in the simulation training (n=2), we had a total of 90 survey respondents. We analyzed text responses of 59 trainees who provided comments on this item. Survey responses could largely be categorized into three groups: positive (67.8%), positive with suggestions for improvement (16.9%), and negative (10.2%).

Table 1. Content analysis of first open-ended item

Categories	n (%)
Positive	40 (67.8)
Positive with suggestions for improvement	10 (16.9)
Negative	6 (10.2)
Miscellaneous	3 (5.1)

Item 2: Please add a few statements that summarize your experiences in the Simulation Labs to help us improve the scenarios.

Most trainees (70.7%) provided comments in regards to the simulation training on the second open-ended item. We analyzed text responses of 65 trainees who provided comments to this item.

Table 2. Content analysis of second open-ended item

Categories	n (%)
Positive	26 (40.0)
Positive with suggestions for improvement	35 (53.8)
Negative	4 (6.2)

The majority (93.8%) of the trainees indicated that the experience was positive, with many trainees providing specific recommendations on how the training could be improved. We further analyzed these recommendations and found that specific recommendations were related to the following (Table 3): time (34.3%), scenarios (8.6%), instruction (17.1%), acting (14.3%), feedback (8.6%), documentation (2.9%), and court (5.7%).

Table 3. Content analysis of second open-ended item: Positive with suggestions for improvement

Categories	Example	Trainees' comment	n (%)
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer than a week • More simulation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“It would be more effective if the training was longer and everyone was given the chance to go through a full case instead of breaking it up...”</i> • <i>“In my opinion Simulation needs to be longer. Every worker should have a chance to interview all parties. More training in that area should be provided for all. You feel rushed.”</i> 	12 (34.3)
Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different allegations • New scenarios • Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I felt that the simulation experience was real. However, I would have liked to experience a situation involving the ER since parents can be more stressed out in that situation.”</i> • <i>“The majority of children involved with DCFS is African American and now adding to that is Latinos - why not reflect that in the simulations to be represented as the majority of us coming to training is majority people of color...”</i> 	3 (8.6)
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors • Level of instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My experience in the Sim Labs was relatively positive. The only struggle was having new trainers come in during the last week...”</i> • <i>For scene investigation and mock trial, I felt like that part of training was being created</i> 	6 (17.1)

		<i>as we went through it and it felt unorganized. I also felt like I was being told what to do during scene investigation by the trainers and not left to utilize my tools to conduct the investigation myself..."</i>	
Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not realistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I felt that the aunt who was in the home was not realistic in my scenario."</i> • <i>"The actors should be more respectful of trainee."</i> 	5 (14.3)
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to watch the video and learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"It was a valuable experience in which we were able to find ourselves in situations that we will be in once out in the field. It would also be helpful to receive the footage from the other interactions, not just Knock on Door day."</i> • <i>"Feedback from the actors regarding how I made them feel as well as feedback from my instructors regarding following policy and procedure was invaluable. I think it could be beneficial to have a camera facing the other direction, or encourage the CPS to sit facing the camera, in order to capture our facial expressions during the 'door knock' simulation."</i> 	3 (8.6)
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to practice documenting notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I realize that there is only so much time in 1 week that we all have together, however, I think that the this simulation could be more helpful and realistic, if we could input the</i> 	1 (2.9)

		<i>CERAP, Safety Plan and Home Safety Check List...</i>	
Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add cross examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I also felt that the court experience was great however, I would have liked to have been questioned by all the attorney's and not just the states attorney."</i> • <i>"The scenarios were great, however all materials from the scenarios should be used during the court testimony."</i> 	2 (5.7)
Miscellaneous		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Maybe tone down on the home safety check, this way it might challenge future investigators in training."</i> 	3 (8.6)