

# Assessing an Innovative Method for Training Child Protection Investigators

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Illinois Department of

**DCFS**

Children & Family Services



# Three Teams with Important Roles

- **Illinois Department of Children & Family Services,  
Office of Learning & Professional Development**  
Monico Whittington-Eskridge, Associate Deputy Director
- **Simulation Training Program at Child Protection Training Academy,  
University of Illinois at Springfield**  
Betsy Goulet, D.P.A., Principal Investigator  
Susan Oppegard Evans, Executive Director  
Amy Wheeler, Lead Facilitator  
Taylor McCarthy, Coordinator
- **Program Evaluation Team at Children and Family Research Center,  
School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**  
Theodore Cross, Ph.D., Principal Investigator  
Yu-Ling Chiu, Ph.D.



# Value of simulating child protection work in training

- Practicing the behavior
- Getting feedback from debriefs
- Observing other trainees' actions and debriefs
- Trainees are more engaged
  - Sensory – visual, auditory, olfactory
  - Emotional
  - Critical thinking
- Best way to determine the field is not for you



# Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA)

- Developed family residence and courtroom simulation labs at UIS for CPS investigators
- Partnership with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Training all new Illinois investigators since February 2016 (N=572)



# CPTA Training Team

- Simulation trainer
  - Former DCFS investigator and long-time classroom trainer
  - Has trained hundreds of DCFS investigators
- Standardized patients
  - “Actors” who play role of family under investigation
  - from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine’s Standardized Patient Program
  - Also trained to provide feedback to professionals (doctors and now child protection investigators)
- Courtroom professionals
  - Current and retired judges and lawyers
  - Play roles resembling their real life experience



# A Simulation Training week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introduction	Door Knock	Scene Investigation	Fishbowl Interviews	Pre-Hearing Meeting with Parents
Collateral Calls	Interspersed with Individual Debriefs	Interspersed with Individual Debriefs	Court Prep Training	Court Simulation
Debrief	Overall Debrief	Supervision	Overall Debrief	Overall Debrief
		Overall Debrief		

# Program Evaluation

- Initial Evaluation (FY2017)
  - Post-training satisfaction survey analysis Interviews with key formants, including two trainees
  - Observation of simulation training
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Evaluation (FY2018)
  - Study of simulation training process: focus groups and interviews
  - **Investigator survey**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Evaluation (FY2019)
  - Turnover study
  - Daily Experience of Simulation Training

# Investigator survey

- To assess the impact of simulation training on DCFS investigators' experience of their work.
- An online survey was sent to all current DCFS investigators
- 259 DCFS investigators (35% response rate)
- Analysis compared investigators with simulation training (n=122) and investigators without simulation training (n=115)



# Scales

How well Certification Training prepared them for their job	9 items	1-very poor to 5-very well
Difficulty of acquiring different skills as an investigator	9 items	1-very easy to 4-very difficult
Job Satisfaction	11 items	1-very dissatisfied to 4-very satisfied
Turnover Intentions Scale	6 items	Yes/No
Which simulations were useful (simulation training group only)	4 items	1-strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree
Effectiveness of simulation training for preparing them for their work (simulation training group only)	6 items	1-useless to 5-very useful



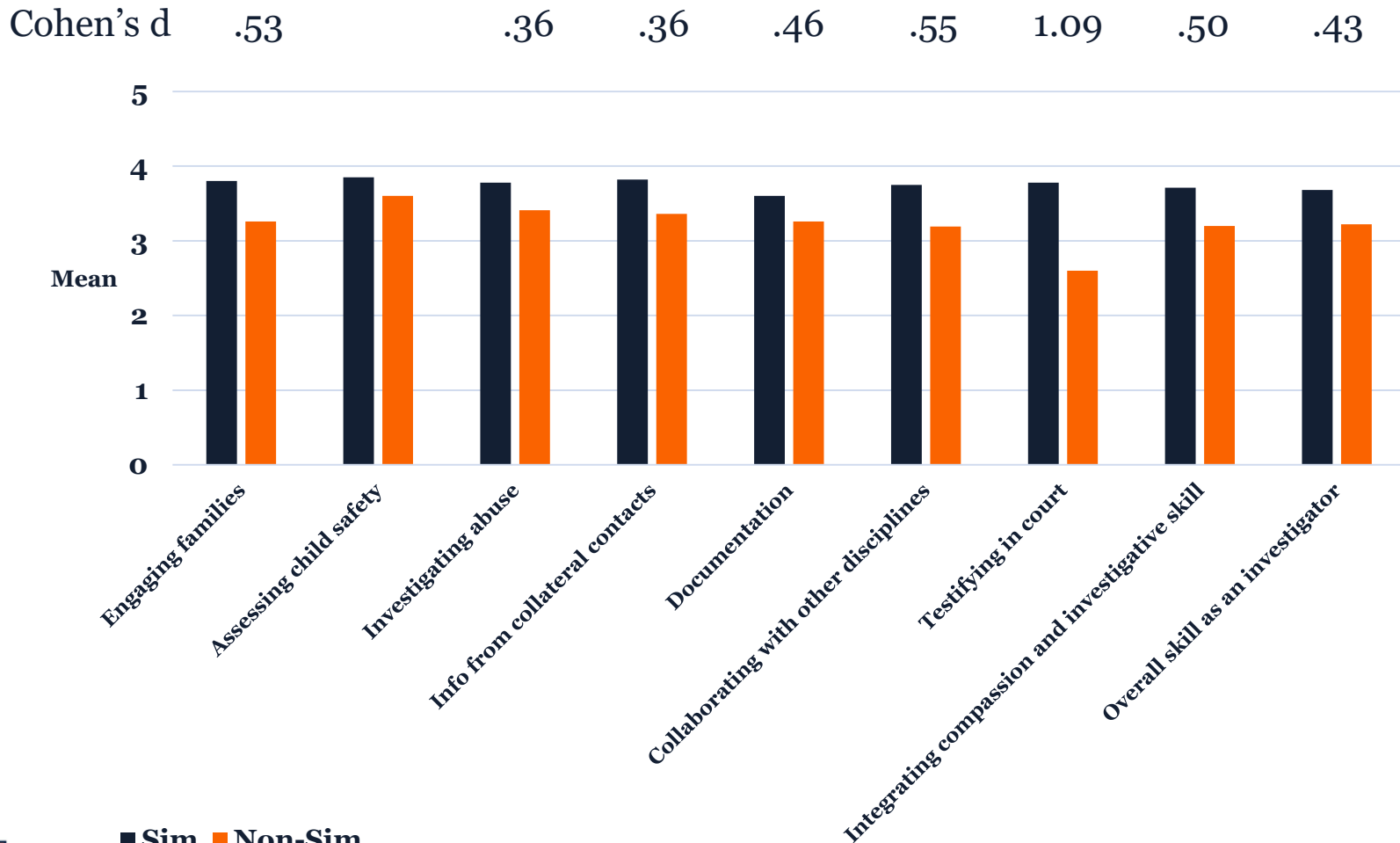
See the attachment for more details

# Sample characteristics

Gender	83.5% were females
Age	The median age was 41 to 50
Race	58.1% were white
Education Background	65.7% had a master's degree 55.5% had a degree in social work
Tenure in Child Welfare	61.7% had more than 10 years
Tenure as a DCFS Investigator	51.3% had two years or less
Caseload in the past 30 days	53.1% had a caseload of 11 to 25 cases 33.1% had more than 25 cases
Simulation Training	51.5% had received simulation training



# Sim-trained group rated their Certification Training more highly



■ Sim ■ Non-Sim

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■ Sim ■ Non-Sim

# Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills

	Creating evidence-based documentation			Testifying in court		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Simulation Training-No</b>	0.445	0.221	0.280*	0.684	0.275	0.375*
<b>Age</b>	-0.008	0.071	-0.011	0.009	0.088	0.010
<b>Race-White</b>	0.199	0.137	0.121	0.069	0.170	0.037
<b>Graduate Degree</b>	0.028	0.143	0.017	0.094	0.184	0.050
<b>Social Work Degree</b>	-0.085	0.135	-0.053	-0.036	0.171	-0.020
<b>Caseload in the Past 30 Days</b>						
<b>0 to 10 cases</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>11 to 25 cases</b>	0.110	0.202	0.069	0.002	0.251	0.001
<b>More than 25 cases</b>	0.460	0.209	0.276*	0.009	0.255	0.005
<b>Tenure in Child Welfare</b>						
<b>Less than 2 years</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>3 to 5 years</b>	0.596	0.263	0.226*	0.677	0.308	0.244*
<b>6 to 10 years</b>	0.310	0.225	0.146	0.415	0.289	0.171
<b>More than 10 years</b>	0.144	0.223	0.089	-0.298	0.307	-0.162
<b>Tenure as an Investigator</b>						
<b>Less than 6 months</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>6 to 12 months</b>	-0.543	0.275	-0.231*	-1.022	0.375	-0.369**
<b>1 to 2 years</b>	-0.234	0.247	-0.134	-0.604	0.336	-0.294
<b>3 to 5 years</b>	-0.188	0.369	-0.071	-1.001	0.490	-0.306*
<b>More than 5 years</b>	-0.538	0.332	-0.331	-0.797	0.443	-0.435

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$



# Turnover Intention

	Move Inside DCFS (n=190) <u>Exp(b)</u>	Leave DCFS (n=183) <u>Exp(b)</u>
<b>Simulation Training-No</b>	4.192*	3.546 <sup>+</sup>
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	1.182	1.706
<b>Age</b>		
<b>21-30 years old</b>	-	-
<b>31-40 years old</b>	0.750	0.773
<b>41-50 years old</b>	0.546	0.475
<b>51-60 years old</b>	0.904	1.01
<b>61 years and older</b>	1.208	1.250
<b>Race-White</b>	0.608	1.078
<b>Graduate Degree</b>	1.815	1.340
<b>Social Work Degree</b>	1.166	1.498
<b>Caseload in the Past 30 Days</b>		
<b>0 to 10 cases</b>	-	-
<b>11 to 25 cases</b>	1.559	2.434 <sup>+</sup>
<b>More than 25 cases</b>	0.886	0.921
<b>Tenure in Child Welfare</b>		
<b>Less than 2 years</b>	-	-
<b>3 to 5 years</b>	0.451	0.287**
<b>6 to 10 years</b>	0.561	1.473
<b>More than 10 years</b>	1.079	1.326
<b>Tenure as an Investigator</b>		
<b>Less than 6 months</b>	-	-
<b>6 to 12 months</b>	1.793	1.796
<b>1 to 2 years</b>	0.611	0.813
<b>3 to 5 years</b>	1.178	0.686
<b>More than 5 years</b>	1.078	2.045

<sup>+</sup> p<.06 \* p<.05 \*\* p<.01 \*\*\* p<.001



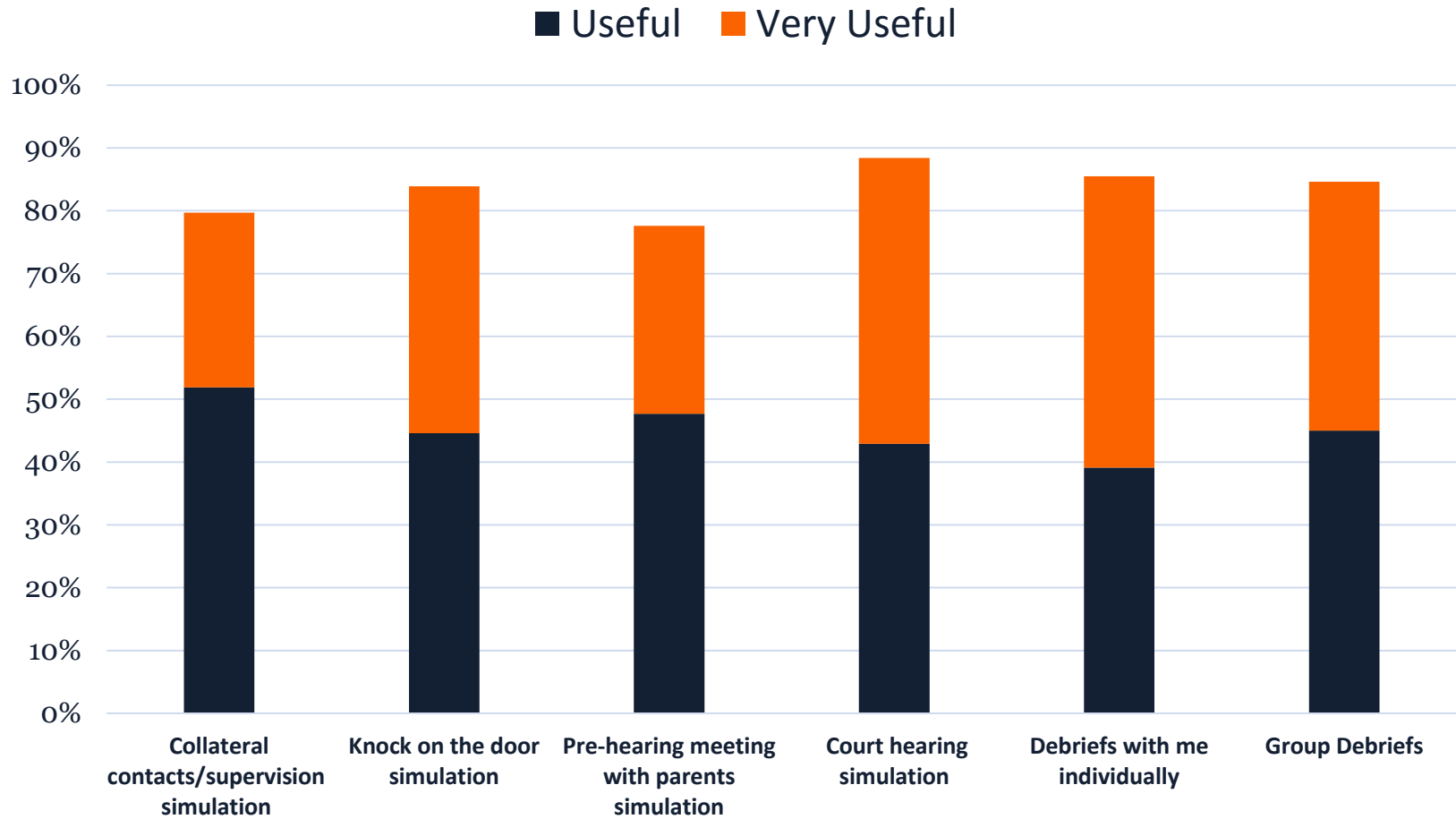
# Satisfaction with simulation training

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean Post-training N=154 (FY2017 Evaluation)</b>	<b>Mean On the job N=110 (FY2018 Evaluation)</b>
<b>The scenario environment was realistic. I was able to incorporate my training into practice</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>The SIM lab provided a realistic experience of the challenges I will face when working in the field</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Participating in the scenarios helped to increase my confidence in my role</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>The debriefing sessions provided valuable feedback</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>

1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree



# Sim group's appraisal of their simulations



1-useless to 5-very useful



# Summary of Findings

- Sim group rated their certification training more highly.
- Sim group reported less difficulty acquiring skills of...
  - Creating evidence-based documentation
  - Testifying in court
- No sim vs. non-sim difference on job satisfaction
- Sim group were less likely to answer yes on:
  - I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.
  - As soon as I find a better job, I will leave DCFS.
- Sim group continued to value simulations even 1 to 2 years after training.

# Limitations

- Only a minority of investigators participated in the survey.
- The investigator survey measured investigators' subjective reports and lacks objective data on their performance
- Sim training vs. not receiving sim training is confounded with year started as DCFS investigators
  - We may not be able to control for all differences
  - Can't rule out other history-based explanations for differences between sim and non-sim groups

# Implications for CPTA

- “Feedback is the pathway to mastery”
  - Brené Brown
- Improving critical thinking skills:
  - Problem Based Learning
  - Enhancing documentation/Information gathering
- Reality of the environment

# DCFS Implications

- **Current Implications:**
  - Expansion of audience beyond new Investigative hires
    - Supervisors
    - Veteran staff
  - Adding More Specialties
    - DCFS and Private Sector Agency Staff
    - High Risk Intact Staff
    - Foster Care/Permanency Staff
  - Launching of a Simulation Center in Chicago
    - Expanded University Partnership with UIS and UIUC
    - South-side of the City in an Urban Setting
    - Addition of a Multi-purpose Room
- **Future Implications:**
  - Moving Beyond Direct Service
  - Experiential Learning for Licensing and Legal Staff
  - Foster/Adoptive Parents
  - Incorporation of Youth and Parent Voice in the Development of Scenarios
  - Partnerships with Community Partners and Key Stakeholders

# Thank you

- **Illinois DCFS**  
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# Attachment

<b>Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills</b>	1. Engaging families
	2. Assessing child safety
	3. Investigating abuse and neglect allegations
	4. Collecting information from collateral contacts
	5. Creating evidence-based documentation
	6. Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines
	7. Testifying in court
	8. Integrating compassion and investigative skill in my work
	9. Overall skill as a DCFS investigator
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	1. How meaningful the work is
	2. Significance or importance of the work
	3. Ability to help people
	4. My workload
	5. Quality of the supervision I receive
	6. Opportunities for advancement
	7. Being valued for my work
	8. Cultural sensitivity in DCFS
	9. My physical safety
	10. Working conditions in my office
	11. Data entry/documentation
<b>Turnover Intention</b>	1. I am starting to ask my friends/contacts about other job possibilities.
	2. I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.
	3. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS.
	4. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS because I'm having a concern of my physical safety.
	5. As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave DCFS.
	6. I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.