



Simulation Labs for Child Welfare Training and Education

Mind the Gap National Webinar Series, Session #2, held February 4, 2015

Jurisdiction & Partners Highlighted: Center on Child Welfare at California State University, Los Angeles; Center on Child Welfare at UCLA; Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services

WHAT IS A SIMULATION LAB?

A simulation lab is an immersive training environment that provides a realistic experience for trainees to prepare them for real-world interactions. The lab discussed is a “home” environment that enables the creation of several different scenarios. In the lab, the trainees role-play an event that can take place in the field. Benefits of simulation include:

- Increased transfer of learning
- Practice in a safe environment
- Opportunities to watch and learn from others
- A chance to make mistakes and adjust approaches before interacting with a real family
- Multimodal learning experiences
- Improved skill retention

WHAT IS NEEDED TO BUILD A SIMULATION LAB?

Running a simulation lab can be **labor intensive** and requires **significant resources**.

- Creating a dedicated lab can cost as much as \$20,000, depending on level of investment
- Simulations can be conducted in various “home-like environments” - cheaply and effectively (like extended-stay hotels) - without a large investment
- Note: Donations and recycled products work great to help cut costs (like household furniture, dishes, knick knacks)

HOW THE LAB WAS CREATED

The simulation lab was developed and implemented by a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of LA County DCFS training staff, child welfare training faculty from four university schools of social work in California, law enforcement consultants, county counsel, public health nurses, and other subject matter experts. Observations of other simulation labs in other professions, such as law enforcement, drove development.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Secure support from leadership
- Assess level of available resources
- A standardized format can provide flexible learning
- Keep trainers refreshed by providing practice sessions
- Develop a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team to evaluate training
- Start slow and keep things simple when creating your scenarios
- Always provide an opportunity for each trainee to debrief with an observer
- Prepare and practice, practice, practice



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinar and materials available at:
<http://ncwwi.org/index.php/link/220-mind-the-gap-2-simulation-labs-for-child-welfare-education-and-training>

Other Resources:

http://ncwwi.org/files/Prof_Development_Training/Simulation_in_Child_Welfare_Training_-_Moving_Beyond_Role_Play.pdf