



## About Simulations

The Mad City Money simulation uses no lectures or PowerPoint® slides. It requires teenagers to integrate their knowledge of money, math skills, attitudes about choices, and money values. During the program, participants make decisions with immediate repercussions that might not occur for years in real life. They have the opportunity to modify their decisions and actions and see the impact of changes right away. They have chances to experiment and make mistakes—and suffer the consequences of their decisions—in a realistic, but safe, environment. Simulations are a good way for learners to practice real life by taking on responsible roles, finding ways to succeed, and developing problem-solving tools. Simulations make students hands-on participants, not just listeners or observers. Simulations motivate participants because their involvement in the activity is so personal that it leads them to want to learn more about the simulated subject matter. Face it—most adults would consider the topic of budgeting to be a “yawner.” Books and classroom lectures on the subject likely would put most teenagers to sleep. But a budgeting simulation elicits higher levels of interest, motivation, and engagement. This activity can produce higher quality problem solving in participants than traditional classroom methods do. What’s more, simulations encourage persistence, creativity, problem solution, and cooperative teamwork.

## We are going to let the participants fail.

Really. Let them make mistakes. If you’re used to a traditional teaching experience, you may need to remind yourself not to step in and help participants “fix” their budgeting problems. In this program, we want participants to overspend and end up with purchases they can’t afford. That’s the power of this experience. Participants will realize, “Oh, I guess I can’t have a big house and a new truck on my salary and still pay for day care and groceries.” Sure, you could tell them what choices to make, but that’s not the best way for them to learn. They need to see for themselves what works and what doesn’t. That’s why erasers and calculators are on the supplies list for this program. During the simulation, participants will learn the consequences of their decisions and share their thoughts and actions with their peers.