

# Government of Alberta and Western Australia implement largest international system-wide implementation of Signs of Safety

## Key Facts

### What is Signs of Safety (SOS)?

The SOS model guides work in partnership with families and children to increase safety and reduce risk and danger by focusing on strengths, resources and networks the family have.

### What improvements have been seen since starting SOS?

- Overall improvement in the level of skill, morale and satisfaction of workers
- Increase in family satisfaction
- Significant reduction of the number of children entering care
- Reduction in recidivism rates
- Reduction in number of matters taken before the courts

Note: Significant changes in case data are not measurable until the third year of implementation.

### What is the current state of implementation in Alberta?

- Regions and agencies in Alberta began learning about the approach and adopting some of the tools. There were early indications of the success of this program. Alberta is currently undergoing a five-year implementation of SOS practice across the province.
- Over \$2 million will be invested over the next two years to implement SOS in Alberta.
- Estimated percentage of staff who have attended basic SOS training:
  - Child and Family Services Delivery Areas: 57%
  - Delegated First Nations Agencies: 25%
  - OBSD Partner Agencies: 73%
- Approximately 15 more training sessions will be hosted in 2015, in addition to the 21 sessions already planned for the remainder of 2014.

### What is the purpose of the MOU with the State of Western Australia?

Reflects the shared commitment of Human Services and the Western Australia Department of Child Protection to:

- Exchange policies and procedures, learning strategies, and resource materials,
- Collaborate on SOS research and evaluation, and
- Develop a program and formal agreement for staff to spend time working in both jurisdictions.

Staff observations:

- "...time is spent recognizing abilities (of the families) as opposed to seeking evidence"
- "Kids have a voice in what they want and what works. They define what is safe and what their goals are."

Parents have commented:

- They feel like they are working in collaboration with the worker.
- They are thankful for the case team and even asked to hug them as did not expect to be listened to, have their family and friends allowed to be present and part of planning.