

The mission of F&CS is to work together with children, youth, their families and the community for the safety and well-being of children and youth.

We envision a supportive community where children and youth are safe, secure, and nurtured in permanent loving families

**Signs of Safety meetings** are a way for everyone involved to talk together about worries and strengths and create good safety plans for children and youth.



### We value:

- ▶ The right of children and youth to be safe and secure
- ▶ The diversity of families
- ▶ Positive space that is inclusive
- ▶ Professional practice that begins with a strength-based approach
- ▶ An open and transparent organization
- ▶ Innovation and creativity
- ▶ Social justice and the importance of advocacy
- ▶ Working together to create positive change in our community

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#### FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Welcome to our positive and anti-oppressive space, where every individual, regardless of age, is valued and respected whatever their culture, faith, ethnicity, race, ancestry, class, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

[www.fcsgw.org/positivespace](http://www.fcsgw.org/positivespace)

## SIGNS OF SAFETY:

There is nothing more important than the safety and well-being of children



WORKING WITH  
FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
**BROCHURE 8** IN A SERIES

## What is Signs of Safety?

Signs of Safety is an approach to child welfare work, created in Australia by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards. It is a specific way of working with families that allows everyone to have a voice and to work together to keep a child safe. Signs of Safety meetings are held to assess risk, look at worries and strengths and make decisions about a child's safety. A Signs of Safety meeting helps families and caregivers to work with the agency and other services to keep a child safe.

## Why have a Signs of Safety meeting?

At a meeting, everyone has a chance to share their worries and to hear what others are worried about. It is also an opportunity to talk about what is working well. We think that families are experts about their own family and therefore essential in putting plans in place to improve the situation for their child or children.

## Who would attend a Signs of Safety meeting?

It is always important to be open and honest with what the worries are and to share this information with those people who are involved. This may be you, your child, your family members, friends, support services, community members, or people providing service to the family. A staff member of F&CS will lead the meeting.



## What happens at the meeting?

During a meeting, four key questions are asked and everyone is asked to contribute.

1. What are we worried about in relation to the child and the family?
2. What is working well in the family?
3. What needs to happen to make sure the child is safe in the future?
4. On a scale of 0–10, how safe do people think the child is at this time (0 is not safe at all and 10 is totally safe)?

The information shared is written on a white board so everyone can see what is being recorded. A copy of the Signs of Safety document will be sent to everyone who attended the meeting.

## Listening to children

It is important that children have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe.

If your child is too young to attend the meeting, then his/her views will be sought prior to the meeting.

The Signs of Safety approach uses a number of tools to help workers listen to children and ask them their views including The Three Houses.

### THE THREE HOUSES



House of worries



House of good things



House of dreams

*Created by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening,  
Child and Family New Zealand*

## What is a safety plan?

A safety plan works out how to make sure a child is safe. It is also about who will be involved in the care and future safety of the child.

A safety plan may change over time as families change. Anyone who is important to the child or the family can be included in the plan.

Safety plans must be supported by the people involved. Family & Children's Services, as the child protection agency, needs to agree to the safety plan.