

## Foster Care

### Department of Public Health and Human Services

**Audit Objectives:** *(what the audit intends to accomplish or questions auditors will answer)*

1. Has the Safety-based model used by the Department of Public Health and Human Services to investigate alleged instances of child abuse and neglect led to an increase in the number of children in foster care in Montana?

**Audit Scope:** *(the boundary of the audit & subject matter auditors will assess)*

- Audit scope will focus on the Safety Assessment and Management System model (SAMS) and its use in removing children from their homes
- Determine trends in child removals over the past decade, the reasons for the removals, and if those reasons changed after the implementation of modifications to the SAMS model.
- Review a sample of 108 foster child cases (10 percent of 2018 cases) within the six regional headquarters and an additional six field offices
- Determine the effect of SAMS on the total time children spend in foster care
- Survey stakeholders including, but not limited to, CPS caseworkers and supervisors, district court judges, county attorneys, public defenders, and CASA volunteers to determine how foster care is administered and issues and concerns within the judicial system.
- Determine the potential causes of the increase in foster children.