

# New pilot program launched by CFS

BY ALLISON DOWD

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba has formally launched a new pilot program designed to keep families in need from entering the protection system.

The organization's new Family Enhancement Model is now up and running at its Family and Community Development Centre on the corner of 10th Street and McTavish Avenue.

Families are diverted into the program by intake workers if it's deemed they could benefit from CFS counselling services, but don't necessarily need to have their children placed in protective care, centre supervisor Marie Wotton explains.

"The idea would be to stream them into this (program) before we're looking at crisis situations," she said. "It's more working with the family and saying 'OK, what are the needs? What are the issues? What can we do?' and focusing the services on what the need is."

The program's three dedicated staff are already sharing a caseload of 25- plus families.

CFS of Western Manitoba is also undertaking a one-year developmental project that will look at the various needs of families experiencing violence in their homes, Wotton added.

"We'll be trying to figure out a way for a wrap-around service — with ourselves and other community organizations — to deal with the issues (and) to address what's happening with children. Even if children aren't totally seeing and observing (violence), the feeling is there. It's about how we can support those families better."

The Westman Safer Families Project proposal will be submitted to Manitoba's Child Welfare General Authority at the end of the year with the hope it can be funded as an annual program.

The development of both programs were first announced at the CFS Western's annual general meeting in June 2009.

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