**PAPER NUMBER #460**

**Developing implementation strategies for state-wide child protection reform**

**Presenting Authors**

Leah Bromfield1 and Dan Cox2

**Affiliation**

1. Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia
2. Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Government of South Australia

**Country of residence**

Australia

**Objectives/aims**

Implementation research has primarily focused on program implementation with emerging theories and framework for policy implementation. There is limited implementation science to inform whole of sector, whole of state approaches to enhancing evidence based practice. The aim of this paper is to describe an approach to the auditing and benchmarking of child abuse prevention interventions in the state of South Australia (SA), and the way in which the findings of this audit is being used to inform the development of an implementation strategy for sector wide reform to prevent child maltreatment.

**Methods**

SA state-funded programs (*n* = 106) with child abuse prevention objectives (e.g., child protection, community, education, health, etc.) were systematically assessed to inform investment decisions. Program models were documented in detail, and program theory and cultural competence assessed. Program models were then compared to evidence-based programs and existing program evaluations to determine whether there was evidence for the program components achieving the stated objectives with the workforce stipulated. Individual program information was then analysed for cross-cutting program themes.

**Main findings**

Thirty-six percent of programs were not supported as child abuse interventions. Non-evidence based interventions were common. Across programs, an absence of a specified approach to program components and appropriate workforce qualifications were lacking and there was poor cultural competency. Results were reported directly to cross-departmental committee of Chief /Deputy Chief Executives. Informed by the findings government is developing implementation strategies for workforce development, cultural competency, program re-alignment with evidence-based interventions, and research and development of new interventions where indicated by evidence.