

The Simba project, an innovative family house model

Working toward a safe
and sustainable reunification
for young children in care

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SOS Children's Villages Belgium

No child should grow up alone.
A child needs family for that.



In Flanders there is a **need for family-oriented and small-scale care** for the youngest children who grow up in difficult family situation

Context youth care in Flanders for young children

- 2012: UN states that de-institutionalisation of care must take place, especially for young children
- The Flemish government states in a decree that foster care must be the first type of care to be considered for young children
- Foster care cannot solve all questions, the need for family-oriented and small-scale care for young children remains
- Accents:
 - Secure attachment
 - Intensive cooperation with parents working toward a safe and sustainable reunification





Agentschap
Jongerenwelzijn

Simba family houses

A pilot project of SOS Children's
Villages Belgium
in cooperation with
the Flemish Agency
for Youth Care

Since January 2019



Innovative in Belgium

A specific target group

Very young children (0 to 3-6) from an unsafe home situation

Active involvement of their parents

Brothers and sisters together

Children have a fragile attachment history, emotional and behavioral problems

A specific approach

Small-scale setting of max. 4 children in an ordinary house

Simba parents, one of whom has a professional education. Both parents are coached by SOS Children's Villages Belgium

Aim: to work on a sustainable perspective for the children, in the first instance: family reunification

The setting is family-oriented and with continuous care 24 hours a day

Simba parents work together with the child's parents

Pillars of guidance in Simba family houses

Focus on

- Child safety
- Improve parent-child attachment relationship
- Strengthen parenting skills
- Install or expand social network

Sustainable family reunification possible?

- If yes: working toward return home through intensive supervision of the parent-child relationship
- If not: cooperate with and refer to foster care

Simba family houses in Belgian youth care



Family support

Home counseling



Semi-residential

Daycare



Foster care

24/7 stay

In the weekend, holidays or fulltime



Family house

24/7 stay

Very young children with attachment and developmental problems and parents in a difficult living situation with parental problems

Professional Simba parents



Residential

Residential facility

Boarding school

Closed institution

Simba family houses

as a model for social inclusion?



- Strong cooperation between Simba parents, Simba team (social worker, family coach and team coordinator) and biological parents -> relationship of trust
- Improve parent-child attachment relationship
- Strengthen parenting skills
- Child safety - Safety plan (in line with Signs of Safety)
- Install or expand social network
- Simba parent becomes part of the network

A society where...

**People take
care of people**



Questions?

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