

STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT:

**A Four-Year Plan for Yukon**

**Early Childhood**

**Education and Care**

Prepared by  
Yukon Child Care Working Group

Prepared for  
Yukon Government

Fall 2003

## FORWARD

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The Honourable Peter Jenkins, Minister of Health and Social Services, appointed the Yukon child care working group in response to issues identified by the child care stakeholders in the spring of 2003. This working group was tasked with developing recommendations for a four-year plan to address these issues. The working group volunteered many hours during the fall of 2003 to collaboratively establish issues and strategies to form this plan. The group appreciated the provision of a facilitator to assist with the strategic planning process. The members of the working group consulted with respective stakeholders throughout the process to solicit feedback; correspondence was conducted with over 250 stakeholders. The working group would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide input that guided the content and direction of the plan.

### **Working Group Representatives:**

Alton, Heather	Yukon Child Care Board
Bell, Brad	Health & Social Services
Corniere, Leona	Yukon Child Care Board
Desharnais, Cyndi	Front-line Early Childhood Educator
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Holland, Warren	Minister's Executive Assistant
Lewis, Laurel	Society of Yukon Family Day Homes
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Randhawa, Jasbir	Yukon Child Care Association
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Steele, Judith	Family Day Home Provider
Sumanik, Inge	Yukon Child Care Board
Wengzynowski, Judi	Private Day Care
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Wiseman, Patty	Rural Early Childhood Educator & First Nations Day Care
Boisjoly, Christiane	Facilitator
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## **MISSION**

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Yukon child care exists to provide quality, affordable, accessible and culturally relevant early childhood education and care (ECEC) for Yukon children and families.

## **VALUES**

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Yukon child care stakeholders believe in the following values:

### **Quality Programs**

- Programs which are developmentally appropriate
- Programs which are wholistic and inclusive of all children and their families
- Programs that strive towards having trained, experienced and qualified early childhood educators
- Programs that are community-based and respectful of community capacity

### **Universal Access**

- Equal opportunity for all children to attend quality programs in their communities

### **Cultural Inclusiveness**

- Programs that respect, value, and incorporate the cultural diversity of all children and their families.

### **Family Centered**

Programs that:

- Form partnerships with families
- Support families in their caregiving and decision making roles while building on their unique strengths and resources
- Respect family and community values

### **Partnerships**

- Communication, collaboration, and accountability between all stakeholders

## **VISION**

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In four years, early childhood education and care stakeholders envision for Yukon child care:

- Improved programs and enhanced work environments in the Yukon
- Increased support for families
- Sustainability and funding of quality programs
- Professional standards, quality and accountability
- Increased communication and public awareness

**STRATEGIC ISSUES and STRATEGIES to address them**

<b>STRATEGIC ISSUE</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<p><b>1. Improved early childhood education and care programs and enhanced work environments in the Yukon</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Primary priorities</b></p> <p><b>Enhanced recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and adjust wages comparable to equivalent positions.</li> <li>• Establish benefits comparable to equivalent positions.</li> <li>• Provide financial resources to ensure professional development and education are accessible, relevant, and practical.</li> <li>• Link wages to training and professional development.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conduct a full legislative review of child care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the <i>Child Care Act</i> and regulations.</li> <li>• Enshrine funding for child care programs in legislation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support education training and professional development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding for educational training opportunities for early childhood educators.</li> <li>• Provide paid programming time for early childhood educators by allotting professional development days equivalent to the school system.</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b>Secondary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the feasibility and sustainability of coordinating resources for early childhood education and care programs and families throughout the Yukon.</li> </ul>

<b>STRATEGIC ISSUE</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<p><b>2. Increased support for families</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary priorities</b></p> <p><b>Review subsidy regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates and guidelines for parents and extended family e.g., grandparents.</li> <li>• Review the supported child care fund and the process for accessing services to ensure the inclusion of all children and their families.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secondary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support nutritional food programs for all children e.g., snacks, lunch, and supplementary food items.</li> <li>• Support transportation needs of families using child care programs e.g., for pick-ups at school.</li> </ul>

STRATEGIC ISSUE	STRATEGIES
<p><b>3. Professional standards, quality and accountability</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take leadership with other Provincial, Territorial, and Federal governments in working for new legislation, effective public policy and substantial new federal funding based on the unique needs of the North to support a national strategy for early childhood education and care.</li> <li>• Ensure accountability in funding and service delivery.</li> <li>• Review credentialing relating to the level designation of trained early childhood educators.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of accreditation of licensed child care programs.</li> <li>• Conduct an annual review of early childhood education and training needs, as well as the effectiveness of the current curriculum of the early childhood development program at the Yukon College.</li> <li>• Ensure the Yukon Child Care Board accurately represents all stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secondary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review best practices in early childhood education and care programs.</li> <li>• Ensure educational coursework meets the needs of the field and is flexible in the structure of delivery to reflect community capacity.</li> <li>• Streamline paperwork and administrative requirements in conjunction with <i>Child Care Act</i> and regulation review.</li> <li>• Promote Yukon specific research.</li> </ul>



<b>STRATEGIC ISSUE</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<p><b>4. Sustainability and funding of quality programs</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the sustainability of child care programs throughout the Yukon taking into account the cost of living.</li> <li>• Examine funding structure, policies and practices for family day homes and child care centres throughout the Yukon to ensure similarities and differences are recognized in a manner that addresses the unique needs of the specific programs.</li> </ul>

STRATEGIC ISSUE	STRATEGIES
<p><b>5. Increased communication and public awareness</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Primary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote unity, fairness, and increased connectedness between all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Promote collaboration and integration of early childhood education and care programs with other organizations such as Yukon First Nations Health, Aboriginal Head Start, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, Health and Social Services, Justice, and Education.</li> <li>• Host an annual stakeholders meeting to review strategic planning and relevant emerging issues.</li> <li>• Implement a public ad campaign to heighten public awareness of the value of early childhood education and care programs.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secondary priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use and integration of a variety of communications and networking tools available to all stakeholders (see Appendix A).</li> <li>• Create and maintain a list of funding opportunities available for early childhood education and care programs.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX A

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### EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR COMMUNICATION IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE FIELD

#### Newsletters

- a) Partners for Children
- b) Yukon Child Care Association
- c) Society of Yukon Family Day Homes
- d) Rural Child Care Programs
- e) Child Care Services Unit
- f) Child Development Centre
- g) National: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development

#### Conferences/Public Awareness

- a) Annual rural early childhood education and care directors meeting
- b) Bi-annual early childhood education and care conference
- c) Annual Child Care Awareness Day
- d) Regular meetings conducted by the various stakeholder groups

#### Committees

- a) Partners for Children – Steering Committee, Yukon College
- b) President’s Committee on Programming, Yukon College
- c) Yukon Child Care Board, Health & Social Services

#### Associations

- a) Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
- b) Canadian Child Care Federation - Affiliation
- c) Yukon Child Care Association
- d) Society of Yukon Family Day Homes

#### Websites

Child Care Services Unit

[www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca)

Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development

[www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca](http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca)

Canadian Child Care Federation

[www.cccf-fcsge.ca](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca)

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada

[www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca)

## APPENDIX B

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### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Aboriginal Head Start (AHS)** is a Federal Government program established in 1995 to help enhance child development and school readiness of First Nation, Metis and Inuit pre-school children. The AHS Program is intended to encourage the development of projects that are comprised of program components that include: culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support and parental involvement.

**Accessibility** is the assurance that all families and children have access to high quality child care programs.

**Accountability** means that program operators are responsible to the public and to parents for government funding and for providing quality programs.

**Affordability** all children have access to high quality child care regardless of family income, parental employment status, or geographical location.

**Best Practices** develop and promote practices designed to meet the developmental needs of all children.

**Child care:**

- is an early learning and care program that supports the healthy development of all children;
- supports parents to work, study, participate in community life, and care for other family members;
- supports parents in their parenting role.

**Child Care Act** is the Territorial government legislation that outlines child care program regulations, licensing requirements, and defines all minimum standards required by early childhood educators in their care and supervision of children.

**Child care centres** are licensed and monitored by the Territorial ministry responsible for ensuring the centres meet regulations.

**Child care policy** initiatives range from minor to major. Governments make broad policy statements, or public announcements, of what they intend to do. What then follows is the necessary legislative, regulatory and funding changes that permit the policy to be implemented. Child care ministries also develop policies which shape child care operations outside the legislative process. Examples of policy initiatives include grants to improve wages, changes to child care subsidy criteria, and requirements for centres and dayhomes to upgrade playground equipment.

**Child care subsidies** are Territorial government funds provided to assist families with the cost of enrolling their child/ren into licensed child care. The Territorial government determines who is eligible for a subsidy amount and the amount of subsidy provided based on income.

**Code of ethics** is a document that outlines ethical obligations for early childhood educators in order to commit to the highest standards of attitude and practice in their relationships with children, families, and peers. The principles, explanations(,) and standards of practice are developed to help early childhood educators to monitor their professional practice. They are intended to guide early childhood educators and protect the children and families with whom they work.

**Culturally relevant** means to incorporate and foster traditions, values and beliefs based on respect of children's family heritage.

**Credentialing** is the recognition of professional or technical competence through registration or certification.

**Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)** is a prenatal nutrition program for all pregnant women, new moms, and their babies up to six months of age funded by Health Canada. Using a community development approach, the program aims to increase the incidence of healthy birth weights, improve the health of both infant and mother, and encourage breastfeeding.

**Developmentally appropriate practice** refers to early childhood education and care practice that reflects knowledge of child development and learning and is based on the concepts of age and individual appropriateness. Developmentally appropriate practice asserts that a high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families.

**Direct Operating Grant (DOG)** is a Territorial grant provided to assist licensed early childhood education and care programs with the costs associated with operating an early childhood education and care program. It is meant to increase quality and to keep costs for parents at a lower level. It is paid according to a formula that recognises training levels of early childhood educators, the number and ages of children in attendance, costs of hot lunch programs, and, for centres and school age program's building costs.

**Early childhood education and care (ECEC)** refers to the practice of educating and caring for children.

**ECE** means early childhood educator.

**Family centred** refers to practice that is designed with, rather than for, the child and family. Family centred practice acknowledges that the child is part of a dynamic family system and that any change in the system affects all parts of the system.

**Family day home** means a program which offers or provides child care in a home environment and is licensed and governed by the Territorial *Child Care Act*.

**Inclusion** means providing all children, regardless of ability, access to their community early childhood education and care programs with the necessary supports.

**License** means a license issued under the *Child Care Act*.

**Licensed program** means an early childhood education and care program that holds a license to operate based on the regulations found in the *Child Care Act*.

**Non-profit child care** is registered under legislation governing non-profit or co-operative corporations which prohibits anyone from personally profiting from the operation of the child care program.

**Parent** in the respect of a child, means

- (a) the guardian of the child, or
- (b) the person legally entitled to custody of the child.

**Private daycares** are usually registered under corporate legislation that allows an individual or company to provide a child care program that is licensed and governed by the Territorial *Child Care Act*.

**Public funding** for child care is established by government budgets. Federal/Provincial/Territorial ministries or departments with responsibility for child care determine how the funding is allocated based on legislative and policy directions.

**Qualified** means meeting specific requirements or conditions for employment.

**Quality child care** elements include:

- responsive, stable relationships between early childhood educator and child;
- qualified, knowledgeable early childhood educators;
- retention of early childhood educators;
- small group sizes;
- consistent behavioural expectations;
- daily routines with age appropriate planned activities and play;
- a safe, healthy environment;
- age-appropriate toys and creative materials; and
- supportive interactions and information sharing between caregivers.

**Recruitment and retention** refers to attracting trained qualified early childhood educators who remain in the field.

**Regulations** refers to all requirements that licensed child care programs must adhere to through the Territorial *Child Care Act*.

**Review** means to go over or examine critically and make changes as necessary.

**Stakeholders** are all those individuals and groups that have an investment in quality child care.

**Subsidy program** provides financial assistance to eligible families whose children attend licensed child care programs.

**Supported early childhood education and care program** refers to Territorial government funding which is provided to assist licensed child care programs with the extra costs of including children whose needs are special. The goal of the program is to develop supports within the child care program to facilitate the child's full integration and participation in the child care program.

**Trained** means having the skills and knowledge or experience necessary to perform job related duties.

**Training and education** means opportunities for early childhood educators to increase and maintain their qualifications and professional development in the field of early childhood education, development, and care.

**Yukon Child Care Board (YCCB)** encompasses the role of encouraging the development of child care services to meet the needs of Yukon families, make recommendations to the Minister of Health & Social Services about child care, review and advise on government policies, programs, and administration procedures pertaining to child care, and hear appeals under the *Child Care Act*. Members of the Board are appointed by the Commissioner in Executive Council for two year terms.