



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## Our Vision

The Northwest Territories will be a place where children are born healthy and raised in safe and respectful families and communities, which support them in developing to their fullest potential.

*(GNWT. 2001. Framework for Action: Early Childhood Development)*

# childhood

## The Children of the NWT

The total population of the NWT in 2004 was 42,851 (NWT Bureau of Statistics). In 2004, the NWT had a population of 4,669 children between 0-6 years of age, representing 11 % of the total population.

In 2004, there were 21,363 Aboriginal people and 21,488 Non Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2004).

## Where Our Children Live

The largest grouping of children, 0-6 years of age, live in Yellowknife, the capital city of the NWT. In 2004, there were 19,056 people living in Yellowknife (NWT Bureau of Statistics).

The next largest grouping is in the three regional centres of Inuvik, (population 3,586 in 2004), Hay River (population 3,876 in 2004) and Fort Smith (population 2,514 in 2004) with a total population of 9,976 in 2004. There is road access to Yellowknife from all of the regional centres, though driving distance between Yellowknife and Inuvik is 3,565 km. For this reason, flying is more time efficient than travel by road. Some of the smaller communities have no road access to the closest regional centre. The smallest community in this category, Jean Marie River, had a population of 70 in 2004 (NWT Bureau of Statistics).



## The Agreements

### Early Childhood Development Initiative

In September 2000, the NWT Premier joined Canada's First Ministers (with the exception of the Province of Quebec) in recognizing the importance of investments in early childhood development, and supporting families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children. First Ministers agreed on four key areas for action:

- Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy;
- Improving Parenting and Family Supports;
- Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care; and
- Strengthening Community Supports.

In addition, First Ministers agreed to "report annually to Canadians on their investments and their progress in enhancing early childhood development programs and services in the four key areas for action"

*(September 2000 First Ministers' Meeting Communique on Early Childhood Development)*

# development

### Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Multilateral Framework 2003

#### Background

In March 2003, "Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services agreed on a framework for improving access to affordable, quality, provincially and territorially regulated early learning and child care programs and services."<sup>1</sup>

The Multilateral Framework suggests that effective approaches to early learning and child care are:

- Available and Accessible;
- Affordable;
- Quality;
- Inclusive; and
- Offer Parental Choice.

Ministers committed to report to their public, beginning with a 2002-2003 baseline report, and continuing the following years with annual reports on investments under the Federal Framework.

Through this Framework, the Federal government has committed to invest funds in regulated child care. This funding will enhance the investments made by Provincial/Territorial governments supporting quality child care provided by regulated early childhood programs. The Federal commitment is for five years, beginning in 2003-2004.

<sup>1</sup> "Early Learning and Child Care Multilateral Framework", March 2003