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FAMILIES AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES BENEFIT FROM NEW PROGRAM

WHITEHORSE – Yukon children with disabilities and their families will now benefit from a new program announced today by Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers. The Services to Children with Disabilities Program will be delivered within the Family and Children’s Services branch of the department, through a new unit called “Family Supports for Children with Disabilities.”

“Over the years, the department has provided services to children with disabilities on a case by case basis, but this new program will co-ordinate, expand and enhance services,” Cathers said. “This will ensure that these children will receive the therapies and support services they need to fulfill their potential and live active and happy lives.”

Yukon has a small number of children with disabilities but with a wide variety of disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and Down syndrome. The minister said that while the Yukon program is built on best practices from across the country, it will be flexible in responding to changing needs.

“We don’t have large numbers of children with any particular disability so we need to be able to respond to the ones that we have in a way that best suits the children and their families. Ultimately, our goal is to help and support families in caring for their children.”

The new program will provide coordinated access to services and interventions, and support early interventions to maximize their potential. Support for integration of children with disabilities into community life with the provision of aides, expanded behavioral therapies for those children who require it, and increased training for staff and local professionals will meet very specific individual needs.

“The change announced today will mean enhanced support for parents who face unique challenges when raising a child with disabilities,” Cathers said.

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