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**CHILDCARE OPERATORS RECEIVE 30 PER CENT INCREASE FOR WAGES**

WHITEHORSE – Minister Brad Cathers announced today that the Department of Health and Social Services is increasing the funding it provides to Yukon child care operators for staff wages.

The rate paid to child care operators for their staff wages will increase immediately by 30 per cent and will be retroactive to April 1 of this year. The increase is the result of the Yukon government's commitment to raise funding to child care by \$5 million over the next five years.

“This increase will assist child care operators with their staffing costs, and assist in the recruitment and retention of child care workers,” Cathers said.

Child care operators and the child care community have identified low wages and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff as issues during the past year. Child care operators set their own wage scales for their staff; however, the department provides financial assistance and an incentive for trained staff through its Direct Operating Program.

In addition to the 30 per cent increase announced today, the minister said the department will bring forward additional enhancements to the Direct Operating Grant program later this fall to address parental subsidies.

“The government remains committed to ensuring quality child care for all Yukon children, and will continue to work with the child care community and the Yukon Child Care Board to build healthy families and improve the quality of life for all Yukoners,” Cathers added.

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