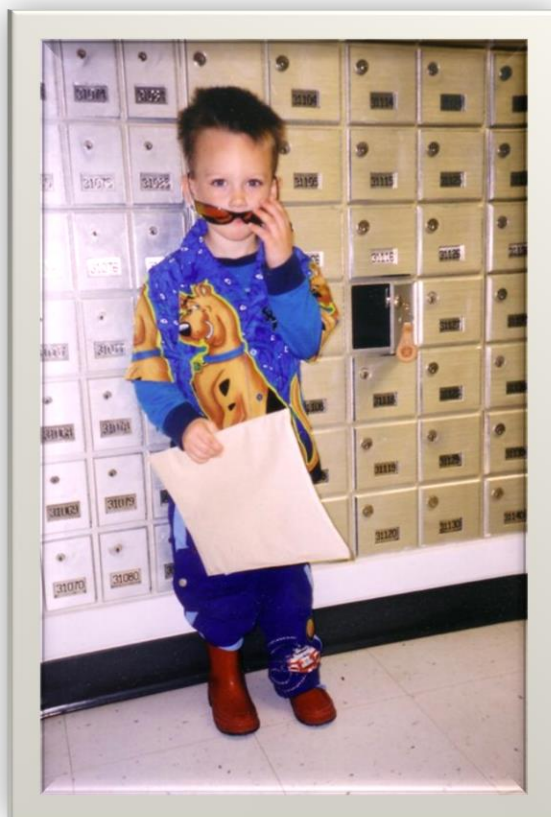




**YUKON CHILD CARE BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**



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April 08, 2023

The Honourable Jeanie McLean
Minister of Education
Government of Yukon
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse YT Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister McLean,

As per Section 4(11) of the Yukon Child Care Act, the Yukon Child Care Board is pleased to submit our annual report to you, so that you may present it before the Legislative Assembly.

This has been another exciting year for Early Learning in the Yukon. The commitment that was made two years ago has now become our reality and we celebrate the steps forward that have been made.

Keeping the child at the center of our vision, we can see that children and families have certainly benefited from the changes that have been made.

At the same time, the work is ongoing, and is deepening in nature as we look to solidify the foundations of this important field. This must be a collaborative undertaking, and Yukon Child Care Board is more than happy to play a role in this vital work.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the children of the Yukon in this way.

Sincerely,

Laurie Parker
Chair Yukon Child Care Board



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Yukon Early Learning is currently in a time of windows and mirrors.

Mirrors ask us to reflect on who we are, what we stand for, what we need to do. Windows invite us to look outward and forward with a vision in mind. This juxtaposition of looking at, looking in, and looking out is an apt metaphor for the work in hand right now.

We look at ourselves and the roles we play in creating a new world of Early Learning in this Territory. We reflect on the history of the past as well as the potential of the future.

In the past year, we at the Yukon Child Care Board have found ourselves pondering the question of time. It has now been two years since the implementation of a ground-breaking Early Learning approach in the Yukon. The effect on the field has been both innovative and trailblazing.

It is time to dig deeper into the work. The revolutionary changes have been made – now we must delve into the changes that require time, commitment, and step by step progress.

Yet the question remains – how much time will it take? How much time for the Child Care Act of 1993 to be opened and updated? How much time is needed to fix issues of recruitment and retention? How much time will it take to see real progress in Inclusion?

Our fear is that every day, week, month that children must wait for these important changes is time lost to them. We recognize that children who are currently toddlers in Yukon Early Learning programs will be in public school before we see any real progress with the Child Care Act.

And so the question emerges: **Is that good enough for our children?**

In this Annual Report, we have tried to focus on immediate actions that could be taken to improve the field without having to rely on the slow-moving machine of governmental policy.

Time is of the essence – the children should not have to wait for a better world.

Laurie Parker – Chair, Yukon Child Care Board



WHO WE ARE – MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS



Terra Blanchard: I was born and raised in The Yukon. My goal, since graduating with my ELCC diploma, is to help bring more awareness to the value of Early Childhood Education. I am the supervisor for the Dunena Ko'honete ko Daycare in Mayo. I serve on JV Clark's school council, and I am a part of the Early Learning Program Advisory Committee. I believe children are capable and competent and deserve a high-quality environment. That educators work hard and need proper recognition.



Jennifer Bugg: Inclusion is my passion. I began working in Early Learning and Inclusion in 2009 and am now a program coordinator at the Child Development Centre. The children, families and educators inspire me every day to learn and grow and to better serve The Yukon. I am also a sessional instructor for the Early Learning Department at Yukon University. I have been in The Yukon since 2007 and call it my home.



Cyndi Desharnais: I am a long-time Yukoner and believe that ages 0 to 6 is the greatest learning curve in a person's life. I have been in the early childhood education field for nearly 30 years as a Day Care Director. I am President of the Yukon Child Care Association and am an active member of the Canadian Child Care Federation Council.



Ashley Griffis: I am a life-long Yukoner and have been in the field of early learning in one form or another since 1997. Most recently I have found a passion in supported childcare, inclusive practice, and social emotional development. I am currently working at the Child Development Center as an inclusion coach with the Early Learning Program Support (ELPS) team.



Clayton Keats, Vice-Chair: I arrived in Yukon in 1998 when I moved from my hometown of Bonavista, NL. I've served the Child Care field in many capacities and have been working at Church of the Nazarene Daycare since 2002, where I also hold the position of Associate Pastor.



Kristy Kennedy: I joined the high-stakes world of affordable, accessible, inclusive and quality care while endeavouring to raise my own children in Whitehorse over the past decade. My front row seat to the good, the bad, and the truly exceptional care our community has to offer motivated me to take a more active role in shaping the systems and supports we provide to these vulnerable members of our community. I joined the YCCB because all children (and their parents, siblings, grandparents, care-givers, and society members) deserve nothing less than exceptional care during their early years.





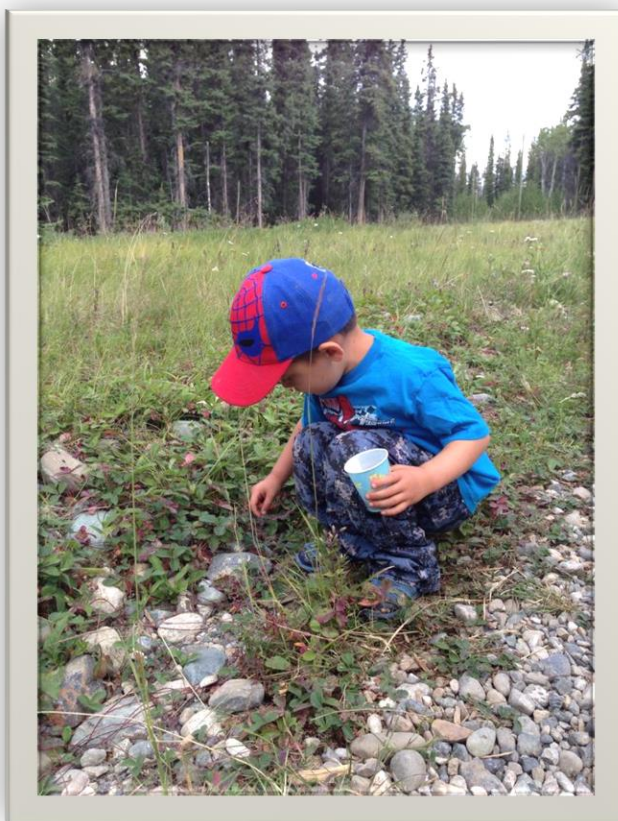
Laurie Parker, Chair: On the first day of Kindergarten, I came home and told my Mom that I was going to be a teacher. That dream never once wavered. I graduated in early learning in 1981 and have worked with young children for over 40 years. In the past few years my work has expanded to being an instructor for the Early Learning Department at Yukon University.



Sophie Partridge, Administrative Support: I arrived in Yukon in 1972 and quickly adapted to life in the Yukon. I worked with the Government of Yukon in many exciting capacities and began supporting YCCB in 1998. I know how vital the work of YCCB is to the overall well-being of children.



Unknown Member: This could be you - join the Yukon Child Care Board today! Application forms are available at <https://yukon.ca/en/child-care-board-yukon#apply-to-me-a-member>



WHAT WE DO

MANDATE

Under section 4 of the Yukon Child Care Act, the Yukon Child Care Board is established with the following functions:

- to encourage the development and support of child care services which meet the needs of parents and children in the Yukon;
 - to make recommendations to the Minister on any matter pertaining to child care;
 - to review any policies, programs, services or administrative procedures of government departments in matters pertaining to child care;
 - to advise on the planning, development, standards, co-ordination and evaluation of child care services in Yukon; and
 - to hear appeals under this Act.
-

VISION

Yukon Child Care Board proactively supports the management of child care issues and decisions, thereby yielding strength, innovation, and resiliency for the child care industry, its workers and all families affected by childcare policies and decisions.

MISSION

Maintain our board at full capacity with trained and knowledgeable members that are able to fulfill the board's responsibilities under the Child Care Act and effectively serve our stakeholders.



YCCB Accomplishments this Year

The Yukon Child Care Board has been very busy this year. In 2022 we held 6 meetings, and so far in 2023 (to May 31) we have had 7 meetings. Representatives of the ELCC Unit attended 3 of those meetings to give us updates on their work – Dec. 1, 2022, Jan. 20, 2023, and May 16, 2023.

These are the highlights of what we've been doing since our last annual report:

1. Two new members joined our Board
2. Creation of our own website <https://yukonchildcareboard.com/>
3. Creation of our first operational budget
4. Two-day Board training for hearing appeals
5. Jenn Bugg attended a Canadian Child Care Federation Affiliate meeting in Ottawa on behalf of our Board
6. We had representation on the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education
7. We had representation on the Technical Advisory Group formed by the ELCC Unit
8. Consultation with the people conducting the Review of the Supported Child Care Worker program
9. Consultation with the Recruitment and Retention of Educators advisors
10. Consultation with the new Quality Roots program
11. Beginning work on the process of intentional planning for succession of member and executive roles on the Board
12. Beginning work on a brochure that describes the appeals process
13. Supporting programs who bring concerns to us
14. Responding to inquiries from parents as well as educators in the field

In the coming year we hope to finalize a number of the incomplete items on this list and add many more accomplishments as well.



Yukon Early Childhood 2022-2023 The Big Picture From the Perspective of Yukon Child Care Board and Top Eleven Recommendations for Moving Forward

Many wonderful actions have happened in Early Learning in the past year. They include:

- Families continue to enjoy lower tuition costs
- Programs have been supported with additional funds for cultural and materials purchase
- Educators have access to benefits such as life insurance, health care, etc.
- Professional development opportunities have been offered
- The number of spaces for early learning has increased
- There are an increased number of level 3 educators in the Territory
- An independent review of the Supported Child Care Worker process is being conducted
- An independent study is being conducted for Recruitment and Retention of Educators

Without a doubt, these are impressive and positive moves forward in our shared vision of quality early learning in Yukon Territory. **Yet much still remains to be done.** The true work lies ahead.

We are aware of the aspect of time associated with what is currently in motion. We look forward to reading the results of the two independent studies currently being conducted. We continue to hear that the Yukon Child Care Act of 1993 will finally be opened and upgraded. These are important pieces in our journey forward, but they require significant amounts of time.

Our focus in this report will be on certain steps that could direct change immediately. Here is a bird's eye view of the recommendations made in this report:

- ✚ Recommendation 1: That Yukon Government officially adopts and mandates the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia Code of Ethics as the official defining documents for early learning practice in the Yukon.
- ✚ Recommendation 2: That Yukon Government mandates a specific number of professional development hours that all educators must complete.
- ✚ Recommendation 3: That Yukon Government develop focused and intentional ways in which to support the exceptional challenges of programs that are in rural parts of Yukon.
- ✚ Recommendation 4: That Yukon Government hires a person from a Yukon Community to be a specific liaison for the programs in Community.
- ✚ Recommendation 5: That Yukon Government adds Level 4 and Level 5 for educators who hold actual early learning diplomas (Level 4) and further education in early learning such as a degree, Masters, or PHD accreditation.
- ✚ Recommendation 6: That Yukon Government rewrite the inspection reports used for spot inspections to mirror an ELCC lens.
- ✚ Recommendation 7: That Yukon Government make inspection reports of programs more easily accessible to the public.



- ✚ Recommendation 8: That Yukon Government undertake a collaborative review of the inspection process.
- ✚ Recommendation 9: That Yukon Government renames the term inspector.
- ✚ Recommendation 10: That Yukon Government is more transparent and collaborative with decisions it makes.
- ✚ Recommendation 11: That Yukon Government streamlines the process for applications to the Yukon Child Care Board.

Time is of the essence. Let's not make the children wait any longer.



Update on Previous Goals and Priorities

STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN YCCB ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Colour Key:

Gold – Recommendation made in last year’s annual report

Red – No progress seen to date

Green – In progress and evolving; ongoing

Blue – Ongoing with high priority

Gray – Completed – no further action required at this time

1. Child Care Act Renewal

Recommendations: That Government of Yukon immediately modernize the Child Care Act and its Regulations and collaborate with the YCCB during all stages of modernizing the Child Care Act and Regulations.

Progress: None to date. While there has been talk that this will happen, there has been no official or discernible progress. We recognize that this is a lengthy process that takes time but until we see action/change, we cannot change the designation for this priority. No collaboration has begun.

Further Action Required: Ongoing with High Priority

2. Inclusion for Children with Exceptionalities

Recommendation 1: That Government of Yukon add Inclusion as a 4th foundational pillar in the approach to universal child care. Currently the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Unit names Affordability, Accessibility, and Quality as the key components of their approach. We want to see Inclusion included as well.

Progress: None to date. While Inclusion has been named as a priority verbally, it has not been officially designated and is not named as a pillar on any ELCC Unit information.

Further Action Required: Ongoing

Recommendation 2: That Government of Yukon conducts a third-party public review of the current supported child care system in order to identify priorities and gaps. This review must include all stakeholders, especially families. It is imperative that this review take place in 2022. Also, that the Government of Yukon undertakes creation of an innovative supported inclusion system that reflects the needs of the children, families, educators, and centres.

Progress: Evolving. A review has begun and is currently in the stage of information gathering. We look forward to the day when recommendations will be forthcoming and true Inclusion becomes a reality.

Further Action Required: Ongoing



3. Strengthening Early Learning Environments

Recommendation 1: That Yukon Government implements a system of evaluation and assessment of centres using a mutually agreed upon tool.

Progress: None to date. We have no knowledge of any progress made with this action item.

Further Action Required: Ongoing

Recommendation 2: That Yukon Government commissions an Early Learning Framework that is specific to the Yukon and standards of practice connected to it.

Progress: None to date. We have no knowledge of any progress made with this action item.

Further Action Required: Ongoing

Recommendation 3: That Yukon Government makes recruitment and retention of educators a priority by actively marketing Yukon early learning nation-wide.

Progress: Evolving. A study has begun and information from stakeholders has been gathered. The final report has not yet been received.

Further Action Required: Ongoing

4. Governance of Yukon Child Care Board

Recommendation 1: That Government of Yukon establishes a working Operational Budget for the Yukon Child Care Board.

Progress: Completed

Further Action Required: None

Recommendation 2: That Government of Yukon ensures that an Extraordinary Budget is available to the Yukon Child Care Board in the event of an appeal needing to be heard.

Progress: Completed

Further Action Required: None

Recommendation 3: That Government of Yukon searches for and appoints at least two new Yukon Child Care Board members with a hope of securing First Nations and community representation.

Progress: Completed. Two new members joined in 2022 and we now have First Nations and community representation

Further Action Required: None, although we do hope to welcome even more members to our Board in the coming year.

Note: While we are delighted to have our new members, we were frustrated with the process. Our Board needed to prompt YG regarding applications we were aware of but that took months to confirm. There needs to be a more timely and streamlined process.



Recommendation 4: That Government of Yukon commits to providing funding for training up to a maximum of one course per year per board member and secretary.

Progress: Completed

Further Action Required: None

Recommendation 5: That Government of Yukon continues to fund and support the development of an independent website for the Yukon Child Care Board.

Progress: Completed

Further Action Required: None

The Yukon Child Care Board gratefully acknowledges and appreciates the support received from the Government of Yukon with regard to the governance of our Board. While all items are currently marked as complete, we understand that ongoing support may be needed if required.



Strategic Goals and Priorities for the Future

We recognize that many of the outstanding recommendations from previous years are bound by time constrictions because they are projects that require years to complete. We continue to hold the outstanding recommendation from last year's Annual Report.

This year we would also like to focus on new recommendations that can be fulfilled in a shorter or even immediate time span but are also ones we feel would support and inspire the field.

1. Setting Standards for Practice

Recommendation 1: That Yukon Government officially adopts and mandates the British Columbia Early Learning Framework and the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia Code of Ethics as the official defining documents for early learning practice in the Yukon.

Rationale:

- The absence of a Yukon specific early learning framework and code of ethics means that there is no standard for practice in the territory. In order to professionalize and validate the field, these guiding documents are required.
- This will provide documents to be used as the expected standards for all early learning programs in the Yukon. They will support educators to aspire to best practice possible.
- Yukon schools follow the British Columbia (B.C.) curriculum and so adopting the Early Learning Framework of B.C. will streamline and unify education in the Yukon from birth to age 8.
- We recognize that Yukon Government or First Nations communities may develop their own Yukon specific early learning framework in the future. We look forward to that day and will welcome standards that apply directly to the Yukon, but in the meantime we recommend using the British Columbia Early Learning Framework.

Recommendation 2: That Yukon Government mandates a specific number of professional development hours that all educators must complete.

Rationale:

- There is currently no expectation that any educator must complete professional development activities in order to remain current in their practice. Public school teachers are required to be lifelong learners who complete mandatory professional development – why would we expect less from early childhood educators?

2. Supporting Programs in Community

Recommendation 3: That Yukon Government develop focused and intentional ways in which to support the exceptional challenges of centres that are in rural parts of the Yukon.

Rationale:

- Programs that exist in Yukon communities face unique issues that are not easily understood by people in urban areas. Those programs deserve attention that is specific to their individual needs and that recognizes the unusual circumstances inherent in community living.



- There must be recognition that what applies to Whitehorse programs is not always feasible or culturally appropriate in Community.

Recommendation 4: That Yukon Government hires a person from a Yukon Community to be a specific liaison for the centres in Community.

Rationale:

- One of the central and key features of living in a Yukon Community is the collaboration and relationship required in order to flourish there. By developing specific personal connections and relationships, the ELCC Unit will mirror that concept and will come to deeper understanding of what is needed in our Community Programs.
- Programs in community will benefit from having one specialist who holds the vision of what life in community is like. They will have a resource that is more sensitive to their needs and can work with them through the lens of Community life.

3. Credentials and Levels

Recommendation 5: That Yukon Government adds Level 4 and Level 5 for educators who hold actual early learning diplomas (Level 4) and further education in early learning such as a degree, Masters, or PHD accreditation.

Rationale:

- Yukon Government needs to recognize the people who earn early learning diplomas and who take their education in early learning further.
- In the past year many people who were previously Level 3 with equivalence have been reassessed and have been granted a full Level 3 status. This makes them equal to educators who hold specific early learning diplomas and higher education levels. The Yukon Child Care Board feels that this discrepancy creates a system where there is no incentive for educators to take higher learning and it sends a message that an early learning diploma and a Bachelors, Masters, or PHD in the field are equivalent in theory and practice to a diploma.

4. Shifting the Process of Inspections

Recommendation 6: That Yukon Government rewrite the inspection reports used for spot inspections to mirror an ELCC lens.

Rationale:

- Current inspection reports were written when inspectors were based in the Department of Health and Social Services. The reports focus mainly on physical environment criteria and there is very little related to actual practice observed, social emotional context, or annotations of inspired practice. Those reports limit inspectors because they focus more on the physical environment than on the children.



Recommendation 7: That Yukon Government make inspection reports of centres more easily accessible to the public.

Rationale:

- Parents and caregivers who want to make an informed decision about which program is right for their child should be able to use inspection reports as part of their research. Currently it is challenging for anyone to access the reports even though they are available to the public. Online access to the reports would support parents in making informed decisions.

Recommendation 8: That Yukon Government undertake a collaborative review of the inspection process.

Rationale:

- A stronger connection between inspectors and programs can lead to improved outcomes for the children because collaboration can emerge rather than the current process where it is perceived that inspectors are present to find what's wrong with a program. While the power dynamic of inspections will always be present, the support, encouragement, and advice of an inspector could inspire a program to be the best it can be.

Recommendation 9: That Yukon Government renames the term inspector.

Rationale:

- The term inspector carries with it an implication of power, evaluation, and criticism. A simple name change can promote the collaborative and supportive role that these individuals also hold. The YCCB recommends a term such as licensing adviser or licensing guide.

5. Collaboration and Transparency

Recommendation 10: That Yukon Government is more transparent and collaborative with decisions it makes.

Rationale:

- The terms of the Yukon Child Care Board call for us “to review any policies, programs, services or administrative procedures of government departments in matters pertaining to child care; and to advise on the planning, development, standards, co-ordination and evaluation of child care services in Yukon.” We cannot say that these terms have been met because we have not been consulted ahead of time by the ELCC Unit on decisions that we feel fall within our purview.
- In the past year we learned of decisions made by the Unit regarding changes to Level 3 with Equivalence credentialing and changes to the working conditions of supported child care workers from outside sources. The YCCB did not participate in any of these discussions, and we learned of them from educators in the field rather than from the ELCC Unit.

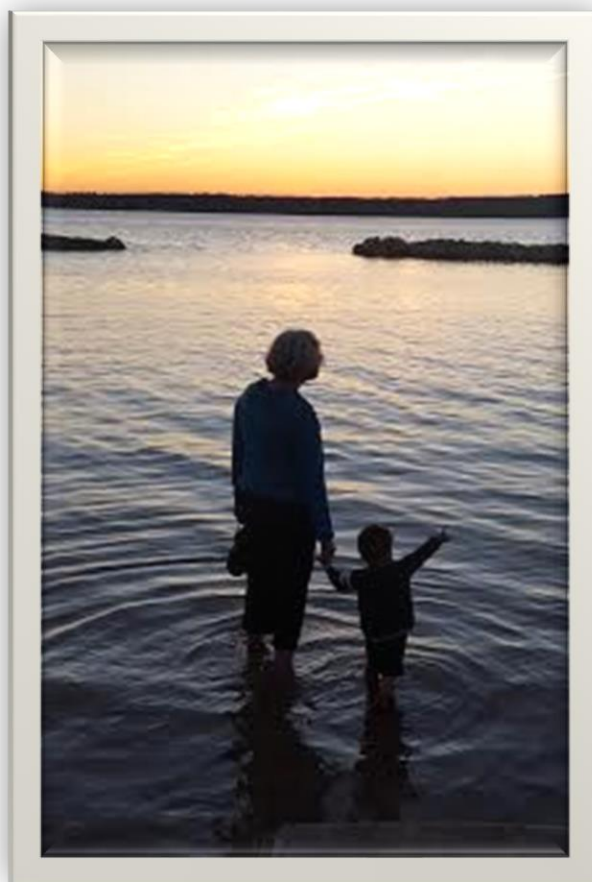


- The ELCC Unit has always maintained that collaboration and communication are key to its work and the YCCB agrees with those priorities but has not yet seen them in action.

✚ Recommendation 11: That Yukon Government streamlines the process for applications to the Yukon Child Care Board.

Rationale:

- We have heard from a number of people who have applied to be on the Yukon Child Care Board that they waited months to hear back about their application and assumed that they were not accepted. The current process takes place at the governmental level but does not seem to be operating efficiently. As well, a number of people have told us that when they went to apply, there was a notice online that said applications were closed. We know that cannot be true because we still have vacancies to fill on our Board. We recommend that the process be restructured, possibly with a Yukon Child Care Board member involved, so that all applications are considered in a timely way.



Looking Ahead

This work will never be finished, but it will always have passionate people like the current Child Care Board members to shepherd, guide, and nurture the field. The Yukon Child Care Board holds the vision that our work is to provide “strength, innovation, and resiliency for the child care industry, its workers and all families.”

Now is the time when all of those qualities are essential. Our quest needs stakeholders who uphold strength, innovation, and resiliency as ways in which to reinvent the field.

This is a revolutionary time to be involved in childcare – and now is the time for the best we have to shine through. The Yukon Child Care Board is honoured to be part of this journey and dedicates itself to another year of collaboration, creativity, and commitment.

The children deserve nothing less.



“Sometimes I wish I could go back to my childhood. Not to change anything, but to feel a few things twice.” Anonymous



Addendum

This is a list of relevant resources that showcase early learning in Yukon Territory.

1. Yukon Early Learning Child Care Unit Newsletters –
<https://yukon-early-learning-educators.ca/en/news-and-events/newsletters>
2. Quality Roots - <https://elccrootsyukon.info/>
3. Network for Healthy Early Human Development Yukon (NHEHDS) –
<https://www.nhehdyukon.org/>
4. Partners for Children - www.partnersforchildren.info
5. Yukon First Nations Education Directorate - <https://www.yfned.ca/>
6. Child Development Centre – includes the Early Learning Program Support team -
<https://cdcyukon.ca/>

