



Child Care Act review Discussion document | **Accessible**

Vision for a modernized Child Care Act

The Yukon's *Child Care Act* came into force in 1990 and, like similar Canadian legislation of its era, it focuses on the health and safety of children and custodial care.

In the more than 30 years since the act became law, early learning experts across Canada have increasingly recognized children require much more than an emphasis on health and safety and custodial care.

Children need high-quality, varied and nurturing learning experiences that help them develop and grow.

Research in the area of early childhood education has clearly linked healthy child development with high-quality early learning opportunities. At the centre of high-quality programs are well-educated, well-qualified and well-supported early childhood educators.

Legislation is key to a high-quality early learning and child care system that is inclusive, affordable and accessible.

Why is early learning important?

Investments in early childhood education support the development of children and the future of a happier and healthier society. Results are best when pre-school-aged children have access to high-quality early learning and child care. It is during these early years that the youngest learners develop vital physical, learning and social skills needed to set them on a path to future health and success.

Learning through play nurtures a child's brain development. The design of early learning settings supports play, wonder, exploration and inquiry. These settings offer many ways to grow language and communication skills.

The goals of early learning programs include, but are not limited to:

- cultivating positive personal and cultural identities for children;
- fostering inclusive environments that respect, value and appreciate diversity;
- nurturing strong relationships with other children and caregivers;
- participating in literacy- and numeracy-rich environments;
- learning with others through play and inquiry;
- practising social-emotional and problem-solving abilities;
- developing and nurturing positive self-esteem;
- encouraging life-long learning and well-being; and
- improving fine and gross motor skills.

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Accessible and flexible early learning and child care supports families participating in employment, education or training, and harder-to-serve populations. Early learning and child care spaces need to be available equally to as many children as possible, regardless of family income, employment status, geographic location or other factors that may inhibit the ability to access programs.

During previous engagements, we heard that high-quality early learning and child care should be flexible and broadly available to respond to the varying needs of children and families to promote early childhood development.

Question:

1. How can we support early learning and child care being more accessible in the Yukon?



If you have comments you would like to share with us, please send them to childcareactreview@yukon.ca.