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January 10, 2022

Currie Dixon
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
35th Yukon Legislative Assembly
P.O Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Dear Mr. Dixon,

Thank you for your letter dated December 1, 2021 regarding the Public Accounts Committee work on the Department of Education's response to the Auditor General's recommendations. We are pleased that you have reached out to the Child Development Centre for our comments.

As you know, the Child Development Centre is a not for profit organization that has been providing developmental services to children from birth to 5 years and their families across Yukon for over 35 years.

One of the recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada focused on developing and implementing "*a strategy to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve student outcomes, particularly those of Yukon First Nations and rural students.*" We would like to bring attention to the fact that these developmental and learning gaps appear well before children begin school. Supporting children with needed developmental supports and therapies, in their early years - prior to entering Kindergarten – has been shown to improve developmental trajectories for children and better prepare children for success in the K-12 school system. There is much evidence to show that early intervention leads to better outcomes for children and families in many areas, including education. Child Development Centre is well positioned to support the Department of Education's goals in this area

In recognition of the connection between early learning and school success, early learning and childcare transferred from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Education in April 2021. At the same time, Yukon Government transferred responsibility for CDC funding from Health to Education.

As a major service provider for children and families with developmental needs, we have seen a growth in both the number and complexity of referrals. We have growing waitlists and will need increased funding in order to meet the needs of Yukon families. We look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Education to meet these needs.

Another key area of the Auditor General's report focused on a review of the services and supports for inclusive education. We advocate on behalf of families for inclusive early learning and support families to access the supports they need in the transition to K-12 schooling. We appreciate having been consulted for the Review of Special Education and look forward to continuing to partner with the Department of Education as members of several communities of inquiry to ensure that children are well supported as they enter Kindergarten.

Child Development Centre's vision "To support children and families in achieving their aspirations. Together we can reach the stars", embodies the commitment we make to families. We look forward to continued partnership with the Department of Education to start early, improve outcomes and ensure inclusion for all Yukon children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RMoser".

Rachel Moser
Acting Co-Executive Director
Child Development Centre