



# Yukon Child Care Board

2024-25 Annual Report



# 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.

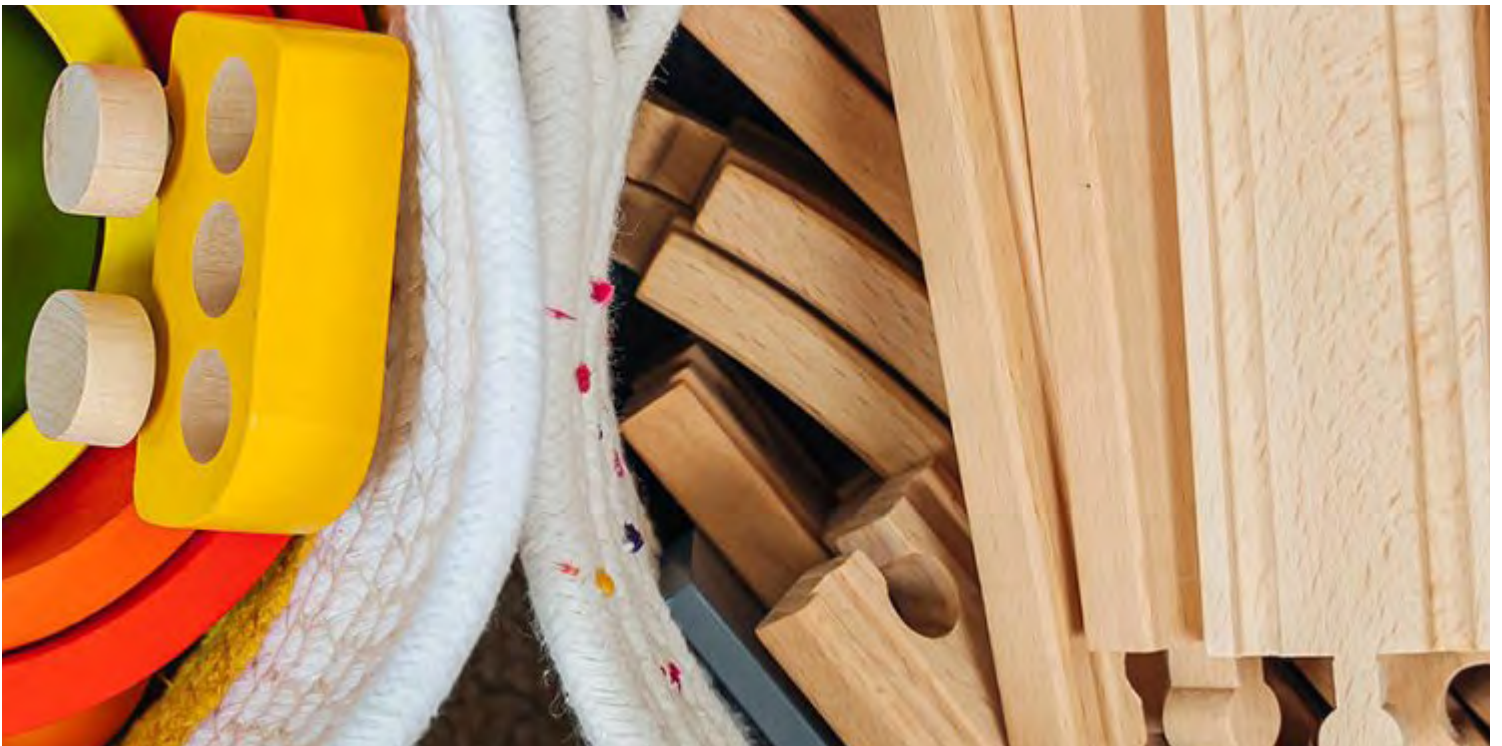
## MISSION

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.



# Table of Contents

Message to the Speaker.....	1
Message from the Chair.....	1
Who We Are – Meet Your Board Members.....	2
Looking Back..Looking Ahead.....	3
Strategic Goals and Priorities for the Future.....	4
Other Recommendations .....	6
Conclusion.....	7





Back-capped Chickadee



Common Nighthawk



Pine Grosbeak



American Tree Sparrow



White-crowned Sparrow

# Message to the Speaker

Dear Speaker

With much respect and gratitude, we are pleased as a Board to present this annual report before you and the rest of the Members of the House today, based on all of our collective work together during the operational year encompassing 2024 - 2025. We appreciate and greatly value the entirety of the workload that everyone before you finds themselves tasked with on an ongoing basis on behalf of the public that they have been elected to serve and are very pleased to see the high value that children have as indicated in the business that has transpired throughout the last number of months from across all of the parties. It is truly an exciting time for all of us throughout the whole of The Yukon. The continued hard work and dedication of the members that serve on the Yukon Child Care Board deserve acknowledgment as we strive to work together for a place where the lives of the children which we are invested in and their families are excited to call The Yukon their home.

# Message from the Chair

Minister of Education  
Government of Yukon  
P.O. Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister ,

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

It appears as if after the Christmas Break this year, life went into fast forward mode for the YCCB this year. We transitioned to having a new Chair being appointed and then immediately were informed about the transition that was under way between the presentation of a brand new Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Act. As this became a major focus of attention, the Board was equally up to the task of being always "at the ready" for its input into any developments and for discussion around the content of the new proposed Act.

As the new Chair, I am so grateful for the very talented, hard working, skilled and very passionate persons that make up the Yukon Child Care Board. In our brief time together this year, we realized that the reality was that we were actually writing a report from two very different perspectives. We very much started the year as "business as normal" mode for much of 2024 and then very quickly switched gears into a more accelerated pace once we learned the The Early Learning and Childcare Act {Bill No. 48} was introduced for the first time to us in February of 2025. While it did not receive assent in the Legislative Assembly until May of 2025, YCCB devoted the better part of our meetings in February and March to the discussion of what the new Act would look like. We realize that the modernization of an Act does not happen overnight, we would also like to acknowledge the hard work that went into seeing this process through the initial consultation phase all the way through the careful consideration that went into the drafting stage as it was presented to the House for debate.

Into the foreseeable future, we strongly feel that YCCB (soon to be renamed the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Board) deserves a place at the table for when the time comes for the writing process of the expected new Regulations

Sincerely,

Clayton Keats  
Chair, Yukon Child Care Board



# Who We Are – Meet Your Board Members

With gratitude, we recognize that our work as the YCCB affects each of the 14 First Nations of the Yukon. We humbly acknowledge our responsibility to the children who live, learn and grow on the lands of the beautiful Yukon. We accept the responsibility to question and to work to change the educational systems and structures that have historically harmed children by removing them from their cultures, families and communities and removing their cultures from education. We commit to finding good ways to apply the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action into our work as the Yukon Child Care Board.

**Jennifer Bugg:** Inclusion is my passion. I began working in early learning and inclusion in 2009. Currently, I manage the Early Learning Program Support (ELPS) team and therapeutic groups at the Child Development Centre. The children, families and educators inspire me every day to learn and grow and to better serve the children of the Yukon. I also consult and provide professional development on inclusion in early learning, and have been a sessional instructor for the Early Learning Department at Yukon University. The Yukon has been my home for 17.

**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, 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.

**Bianka Nash:** I was born and raised in Nelson, BC, and have called Yukon home for the last three years. I began work in the field of early learning 15 years ago, and quickly realized it would become a life-long passion. I am committed to inclusion and quality early learning environments. I currently work at the Child Development Center as an inclusion coach with the Early Learning Program Support (ELPS) team.

**Laurie Parker:** 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.

**Anne Pinkerton:** As a proud Early Childhood Educator and sessional instructor at Yukon University, I am continually inspired by the wisdom of young children and believe they have much to teach us. I am passionate about uplifting the voices of educators and promoting our profession. As Chair of the Early Childhood Educators of Yukon Territory (ECEYT), I believe the Yukon can be a leader in the field of early learning.

**Jen Suttis:** I began working in the Yukon during the spring of 2013 and have been privileged to call Dawson City my home since 2018. I have worked with children in various forms since my teenage years, first through music and movement and later through education. Currently, I work for the Child Development Centre as a Family Partner where I have the joy of supporting families, children, and the early learning programs in the community. I am grateful to walk alongside children as they make sense of the world, and if I am fortunate, they may invite me to join them on their journey!

**Unknown Member:** This could be you - join the Yukon Child Care Board today! Application forms are available at [yukon.ca/en/child-care-board-yukon](http://yukon.ca/en/child-care-board-yukon)



# Looking Back..Looking Ahead

What an exciting year for Early Learning in the Yukon!

As a board, we have been honoured to be a part of the modernization of the Yukon Child Care Act. Though the Act was passed just as our reporting year ended, this significant accomplishment concludes one of the major recommendations that the board has made over the past 15+ years. We recognize and applaud the hard work of the Early Learning and Child Care branch, the lawmakers, our many public servants, and all of the ECEs, operators and community partners who worked tirelessly to complete the work in a way that acknowledges the high stakes of this very important work alongside children, families, and this critical field of education professionals..

Though the modernized act will take some time to be implemented in a good way, the YCCB was excited to hear of several changes that acknowledged recommendations of the board's past few annual reports. Some of these are:

- \* That the Yukon Government develops a territorial registry for Early Childhood Educators.
- \* That the 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. (The Act has mandated that the director develop a Yukon-specific early learning framework.)

The board is excited about what this means for the professionalization and retention of qualified staff in the early learning and child care field in the Yukon, and what this means for child outcomes in early learning programs. We look forward to quality indicators that will be developed to ensure that the children of the Yukon receive the very best in learning and care.

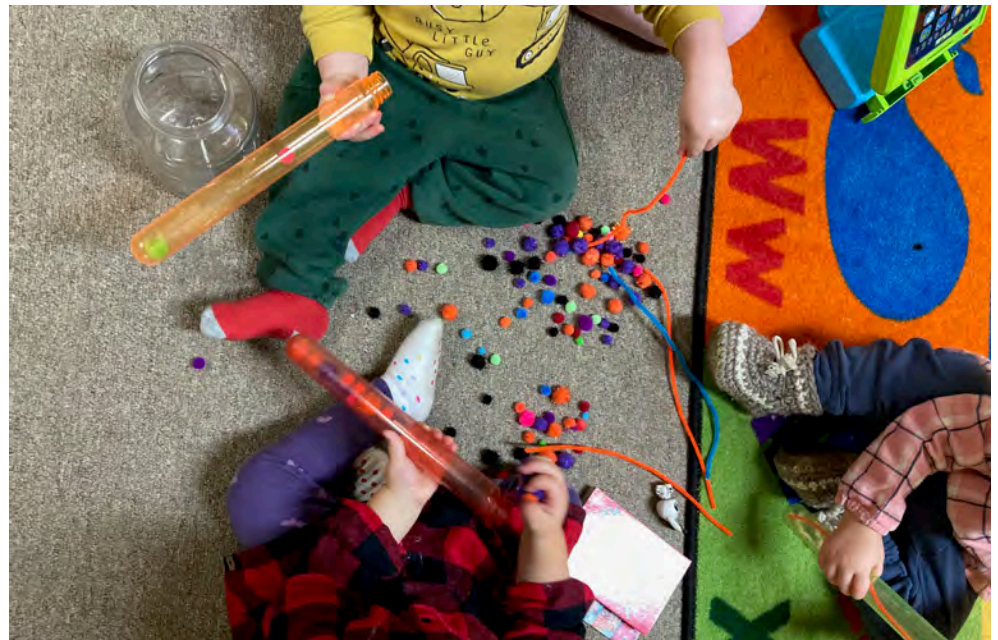
However.... the work is far from over.

We look ahead to the development of the new regulations and policies that will give feet to the updated Act.

The Yukon Child Care Board takes very seriously its responsibility to ensure the new Act meets the needs of all children,

families, educators and programs. We expect to be involved in every step of the regulation-development process and framework development to uphold our legal mandate of:

- \* making recommendations to the Minister on any matter pertaining to child care;
- \* reviewing any policies, programs, services or administrative procedures of government departments in matters pertaining to child care; and
- \* advising the planning, development, standards, coordination and evaluation of child care services in Yukon.



We will look for some of the important points that have been agreed upon in principle through discussion in the legislature and in the new Act to become part of the regulations, policies, procedures and framework going forward. Many of these points have been recommended in the last four years of annual reports (please refer to the annual reports for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 for the specific details).

Collaboration and communication with the board and the early learning field will ensure that this work progresses in a good and sustainable way, where the professionals working with the regulations are excited to move forward with quality and inclusive learning and care for the most vulnerable of Yukoners.

# Strategic Goals and Priorities for the Future

## Recommendation 1:

Set professional learning standards for those involved in early learning

- \* Along with the educator registry, we ask that the Yukon Government ensure that educators and operators are required to continuous and yearly upkeep of credentials via approved and personalized professional development paths;
- \* **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?
- \* We ask that the government of Yukon set expectations around required trainings for leadership;
- \* **Rationale:** When programs are run more like businesses, children are the ones who suffer. To ensure effective leadership in our centres, owners/operators need training on how to provide psychologically and emotionally safe working environments as well as emotionally secure spaces for children and clear commitment to inclusion.

## Recommendation 2:

Increase and differentiate support for community programs

- \* We ask that the Yukon Government increase the time that the ELCC Branch has available to support community programs, and to continue to differentiate intentional ways to support these programs and ECEs with their individual strengths and needs
- \* **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.

Programs in communities 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.





### Recommendation 3:

Ground newcomers to the Yukon in the unique context in which they will practice

- \* We ask that the Yukon Government fund and organize an orientation process and learning about cultural safety for newcomers to become grounded in the Yukon.
  - \* **Rationale:** This potentially could begin to address the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action number 12 by supporting educators to understand Yukon First Nations ways of being with children. This also may demystify how to bring different world views into early learning. Learning ways of cultural responsiveness will increase child wellbeing and belonging.

### Recommendation 4:

Improve the inclusion experience of children with unique needs, their families, educators and programs.

- \* We ask that the Yukon Government create a pathway of development for educators who provide inclusion support for children.
  - \* **Rationale:** Training in universal designs for learning has been shown to increase educator confidence in being with children, retention and job satisfaction. It has also been shown to decrease the need for intensive interventions in early learning and potentially as children move to kindergarten.

### Recommendation 5:

Support the Yukon Child Care Board to carry out its mandate in timely and professional ways.

- \* We ask that the Yukon Government ensure appropriate financial support and streamline the process for appointing new members to the board.
  - \* **Rationale:** the board hears appeals, listens to the field of professionals and advises the minister on important and time-sensitive matters. Having the financial means and the appropriate number of diverse board members is essential to serving the field and the minister appropriately

# Other Recommendations

In our varied roles, the YCCB members have considerable contact with children, families, educators and operators who are involved in the early learning field. As a result we have heard many important recommendations that we ask the Yukon Government to consider as they develop regulations and policies. Now is the time to address the quality needs that Yukon children deserve.

- \* That the Yukon Government provide sustainable funding for a professional organization (association) to support learning, retention and fair and respectful treatment of educators within their places of work;
- \* That the Yukon Government provide a recognition of higher education in the early learning field (bachelors, masters and doctorate level of learning)
- \* Along with the new early learning framework, we ask that the Yukon Government ensure there is a Code of Ethics for both program owners and early childhood educators in the Yukon.
- \* That a safe pathway be built for educators to flag unfair treatment in their workplaces, especially in consideration of the Yukon nominee and permanent residency process.
- \* That there be training for operators and expectations around emotional and psychological safety in the workplace for ECEs.
- \* That a clear pathway for licensing alternative programs (e.g. outdoor programs) be developed as means for meeting the needs of all children and families.
- \* That a clear wage grid be developed and that there be an option for diversifying career options for ECEs attached to the wage grid
- \* That government provide education to the public around the benefit of family day homes and the support to start up more family day homes
- \* That the need for more spaces for after-school care be addressed.
- \* That the Yukon Government modernize the inspection process for licensing of programs by increasing the qualifications of inspectors in order to ensure quality programming and inclusive practice (above and beyond health and safety;
- \* That inspection reports be made accessible to the public as a means of building awareness of quality.
- \* That quality indicators be developed and reported upon to ensure inspired practice.



# Conclusion

Recommendations from our past several annual reports have recently been discussed with the director. The board is grateful for this renewed approach to collaboration and information sharing. We look forward to continued shared work together for the best of all Yukon children, their families, educators and early learning programs. Given that the new Act is in the process of modernizing how the Yukon does early learning, we advise that our highlighted recommendations be included in the new set of Regulations. We advise that the expertise of the YCCB be used in the development of regulations and policies.

We are honoured and grateful for the opportunity to serve the children of the Yukon in this important way. We look forward to a bright future where the four pillars of accessibility, affordability, quality and inclusion are upheld with equity in each program and for each child.



© Yukon Child Care Board  
PO Box 31117  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5P7  
yukonchildcareboard.com  
867-667-6966  
1-800-661-0408 ext. 6966 (Toll Free)

