

Early learning and child care inclusion and supported child care final report ^[1]

Author: Flanagan, K., & Acheson, C.

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Executive Summary

The objective for this work was to evaluate the Government of Yukon's Supported Child Care Program which provides funding to regulated child care settings to support children with a variety of disabilities in order to provide early intervention services for children while allowing their parents to work or study. The estimated start date for the program is sometime between 1995, when new regulations called for "all children with special needs in mainstream child care programs must be integrated to the fullest extent possible" and 2003, when a working group appointed by the Minister called for a review of the Supported Child Care program. Most likely, the program was first introduced in 1999, when a moratorium on child care funding was lifted.

Clearly, times have changed. The work of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (2015) has increased Canadians' knowledge of the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the importance of learning from and preserving Indigenous languages, culture, and ways of knowing. The population of Yukon itself is more diverse in 2023 than it was 25 years ago, with population growth largely driven by immigration. As a society, we are more sensitive to gender diversity, religious beliefs, and the effects of inter-generational trauma on children and their parents.

A scan of jurisdictional approaches to inclusion and a review of recent literature suggest that in early learning and child care, our collective understanding of inclusion considers "how" we respect the diversity in children in child care programs. The RISE initiative in Yukon's public school system builds on that understanding and a shift to a strengths based approach. Although supports for children with developmental challenges is part of that effort, inclusive early years programs are more than that.

The project was conducted in two parts, including both a policy and an operational review. Recommendations in the final report reflect that broader understanding of inclusion and are presented for consideration within Yukon's efforts to build a quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and child care system.

Related link: [Inclusion quality: Children with disabilities in early learning and child care in Canada](#) ^[4]

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