

Cathers, child care providers to discuss \$1.3 million [CA-YT] ^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers will soon be meeting with territorial child care providers to determine how to best use more than \$1.3 million in federal child care money.

The money comes from a \$4.8-billion deal the former federal Liberal government reached with provinces in 2005 to subsidize child care.

The Yukon, however, never signed onto the deal, and the approximately \$1.3 million that would have come to the territory has been placed in a trust.

"We will now take the money in trust, sit down with our day care community and early learning community and see where we can best invest those very limited dollars," Premier Dennis Fentie told a press conference Monday.

The Yukon did not sign onto the deal because it was based on per capita funding, said Fentie.

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The new Conservative government, headed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has announced it will be using the 12-month cancellation clause in the Liberal program and introducing its own child care strategy.

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"They have a plan and they intend to start that plan quickly," said Fentie, who had the opportunity to meet with Harper last weekend in Ottawa. "It has no correlation to per capita funding to a government. That's direct payments to families."

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The Yukon Party has increased investment in child care by 30 per cent since coming into office in late 2002, he added.

In 2002 and 2003, \$230,000 was put toward child care's direct operating grant annually to help increase staff wages and aid with increased operation costs.

In the 2004/2005 budget, another \$675,000 was placed in child care, with the amount rising by three per cent in 2005/2006. It's set to increase by five per cent in the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

The supported child care budget has also received additional funds. In 2004/2005, it was given \$10,000. In 2005/2006, it hit \$15,000, and this fiscal year it will get \$20,000.

The Yukon government has also invested \$70,000 in a public education campaign on the value of child care and child care providers.

- reprinted from the Whitehorse Star

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