

# Yukon

## TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

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**Number of children 0-12 yrs (2001 estimate)** 5,041

*Note: Information provided by territorial officials.*

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### **Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force**

Information not available.

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### **Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (1996)**

Age	North American Indian	Métis	Inuit
0-4	685	45	nil
5-9	665	45	25
10-14	565	45	10

*Note: These 1996 data are the most recent currently available.*

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### **Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities residing at home (1991)**

Use of technical aid	78
Speech difficulty	91
Developmental handicap	35

*Note: These 1991 estimates are the most recent currently available.*

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### **Workforce participation of women by age of youngest child**

Information not available.

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## FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

### **Maternity leave**

17 weeks.

### **Parental leave**

37 weeks. Parents who share a parental leave cannot normally take their leave at the same time, whether or not they work for the same employer.

### **Adoption leave**

37 weeks.

### **Births and EI maternity claims**

Number of births (2000): 370

Number of initial maternity claims allowed (2000-2001): 240

*Note: Territorial leaves are unpaid. The federal government pays for some portions under Employment Insurance. See federal ecec programs for more information.*

# **KINDERGARTEN**

## **LEGISLATION**

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. Education Act, 1990. S.Y. c.25.

The territories and three provinces continue to fund and deliver denominational education. Both “public” and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

## **TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Department of Education.

## **KINDERGARTEN SERVICES**

### **KINDERGARTEN (FIVE YEAR OLDS)**

Kindergarten is delivered in public schools under the Department of Education. Generally, kindergarten is part day for five year olds; there are 475 instructional hours. All five year olds have access to kindergarten but it is not compulsory.

In 2000 one school in Carmacks operated a full-day kindergarten program for five year olds that included four year olds on a half-day basis. A full-day kindergarten in Whitehorse was operated on a pilot project basis.

### **KINDERGARTEN (FOUR YEAR OLDS)**

In four communities, combined four and five year old kindergarten programs were offered to provide children with more time to prepare for Grade 1 entry. Where there are four year olds involved, the Child Development Centre may provide assistance for particular students (see special features).

## **AGE ELIGIBILITY**

Four years and eight months as of September 1st.

## **CLASS SIZE**

There is a territorial class size limit of 22.

The average/mean class size is 15. There is great variation between small rural schools where class size is 5 to 10 students and large urban schools where it is 16-21 students.

There is no Territorial policy regarding teaching assistants. Special program staff determines the needs of individual students.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

There is a policy guideline for children with special needs. Children are included in regular kindergarten unless they have severe, multiple special needs. Extra support is available; the Department of Education assigns Educational Assistants. Services such as speech and language, physical and occupational therapies and psychological services for testing are provided.

The number of children with special needs is approximately 50 students.

## **KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT (2000/2001)**

Five year olds: 400

Four year olds: 30 (approximately)

## **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

The teacher qualification is a B.Ed. There are no special requirements for kindergarten but applications with Early Childhood training are given preference.

There is no provincial policy on training for assistants but some training is provided through Special Program Staff.

## **CURRICULUM**

The Yukon uses the British Columbia curriculum. The focus is child-centred with a balance between play-oriented centres and group instruction. In some schools, First Nations language time is included. The focus is on pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills as well as language and social development.

## **SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2001)**

Information is not available. There is block funding from the federal government.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

Eight rural schools combine four year olds with the regular kindergarten program. The targeted communities are mainly First Nations with many children determined to be at risk (determined by nursing stations and the Child Development Outreach Program). The focus is on language development, social skills, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills.

## **REGULATED CHILD CARE**

### **LEGISLATION**

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. *The Child Care Act*, 1990.

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care Centre Program Regulation*, 1995.

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. *Family Day Home Program Regulation*, 1995.

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. *School-Age Program Regulation*, 1995.

Yukon Territory. Legislative Assembly. *Child Care Subsidy Regulation*, 1995.

### **TERRITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE**

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## **CHILD CARE SERVICES**

### **UNREGULATED CHILD CARE**

#### **Unregulated family child care**

Maximum number of children permitted: 3

Figure excludes the caregiver's own children under age six.

#### **Preschools**

Preschool programs for children 3-6 years that operate for less than three consecutive hours are not regulated.

### **REGULATED CHILD CARE**

#### **Child care centres**

Group care for less than 24 hours a day for four or more children 0-12 years in a place other than a preschool, a school-age program, or a family day home.

#### **School-age child care**

Care outside school hours for school-aged children up to 12 years.

#### **Family day homes**

Care in a private home for mixed-age groups up to a maximum of eight children in groups with: no more than four infants; or no more than six preschool-age children where not more than three are infants; or no more than eight preschool children (including the providers' own children under 6 years). Additional staff are required in family day homes for up to four school-age children in addition to the number of preschool-age children.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

1995 child care regulations state that children with special needs in mainstream child care programs must be integrated to the fullest extent possible. A child is designated special needs on the assessment of a child care professional. An Individual Program Plan must be developed for the child in consultation with staff, parents and professionals in the community. The Plan outlines goals and objectives for the child.

There are no segregated child care programs in the Yukon Territory. The Whitehorse Child Development Centre provides special needs programming and supports across the Yukon. It operates an integrated preschool program licensed for 25 children as well as unlicensed preschool programs. It provides in-home early intervention supports and resources to families of children with special needs. It operates a mobile outreach unit that serves every community in the territory to support and provide resources.

Funding is also available for centres and family day homes through a Supported Child Care fund and is based on the individual need of the child. Funding may be provided for adaptive equipment, transportation, programming support and additional staff.

Parents who meet the financial eligibility criteria receive a fee subsidy for their child to attend a child care program, whether or not the parent is in the paid labour force. Parents who are not eligible for a subsidy pay for the child care space but not for the additional supports.

## **ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE**

There are no reserves for First Nations people in the Yukon. First Nations receive the same start-up and operating grants from the Yukon government for programs they operate as other licensed child care centres and family day homes. They also receive funding from the federal First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative which is administered by the Council for Yukon First Nations. First Nations operate six licensed child care

centres. The Council for Yukon First Nations also provides financial support to one additional child care centre operated by a child care society and a number of family day homes that serve First Nations children.

In total there are approximately 267 regulated spaces operated or supported by First Nations. There are three Aboriginal Head Start programs, two as part of regulated First Nations child care centres, and one stand-alone unlicensed preschool. Parents who use the regulated centres and family child care homes are eligible for fee subsidies.

## SPACE STATISTICS

### Number of regulated child care spaces (2001)

#### *Centre-based*

Infants/toddlers	260
Preschool	409
School-age	251
Family child care	428
Total regulated spaces	1,348

*Note: All spaces are considered to be full-time.*

### Children with special needs in regulated child care (2001)

Approximately 25

### Children receiving subsidies (2001)

790

### Subsidized children as a proportion of total regulated spaces (2001)

59%

### Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces (2001)

Non-profit	674
For-profit	246

## STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

### REGULATED CENTRES

#### Maximum centre size

54 spaces

#### Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-18 mos	1:4	8
18 mos-2 yrs	1:6	12
3-6 yrs	1:8	16
6-12 yrs*	1:12	24

*\*Note: The current Act and Regulations cover special needs children up to age 16 .*

#### Staff qualification requirements

By 1997, 50% of the regular staff in a centre had to meet or exceed the Child Care Worker I qualifications. By 1999, it was required that in addition, 30% of the staff had to meet or exceed the Child Care Worker II qualifications. As of 2000, the new regulations require that in addition, 20% of staff must meet or exceed the Child Care Worker III qualifications.

Levels:

- Child Care Worker III: Two or more years of training in ECD or equivalent from a recognized college or university
- Child Care Worker IIA: 1,447 course hours
- Child Care Worker II: One year training in ECD or equivalent from a recognized college or university
- Child Care Worker 1A: 405 course hours in ECD or equivalent
- Child Care Worker I: 60 hour introduction to early childhood development course (ECD) or equivalent.

### **Parent involvement**

The operator of the centre must ensure that open communication is maintained with parents and guardians on all matters affecting their child. Parents and guardians must also have reasonable access to the program, inspection reports, written policies, menus, log of injuries, The Child Care Act, and The Regulation and Guidelines, and The Child Care Subsidy Regulation.

### **Licensing, monitoring and enforcement**

A government Child Care Inspector conducts one required annual inspection and also conducts two to four unannounced visits per year to each child care centre. Centres are also required to have an annual fire and environmental health inspection.

Child Care Inspectors are required to have a background in early childhood education.

If a centre is not in compliance with the regulations, it is given an order to comply. If the centre does not come into compliance within the stated timeframe allowed by the order, the license may be suspended or revoked or the Direct Operating Grant may be frozen. If a license is suspended or revoked, the centre can appeal to the Yukon Child Care Board, composed of community members appointed by the Minister for a two year term. Its decision is binding.

## **FUNDING**

### **CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

Fee assistance is paid directly to service providers on behalf of eligible parents. Eligibility is determined through an income test which is conducted in person in Whitehorse and by mail-in in other parts of the territory. Subsidies may be used for part-time child care. Parents seeking employment may be eligible for part-time child care for two months.

Subsidy is an entitlement for all eligible families and there is no cap on the number of subsidized spaces.

There is no minimum user fee. Group programs and family day care homes may surcharge subsidized parents fees above the maximum subsidy rate. Subsidies may be used in any regulated for-profit or non-profit service.

### **Eligibility for fee subsidy (net income, 2001)**

	Turning point	Break-even point
1 parent, 1 child	\$20,424	\$31,104
2 parents, 2 children	30,144	51,744

*The turning point is the income level up to which full subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point at which income subsidy ceases.*

### **Maximum subsidy rate/child/month (2001)**

Infant	\$500
Preschool	450
School-age	225
Child with special needs	500

## PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

### Recurring funding

#### *One time funding*

Start up funding is available to family child care homes of up to \$1,000/home in Whitehorse and up to \$2,000/home in the rest of the territory. Start up funding is available to child care centres; however there have been no new centres in recent years.

*Capital emergency funding is available to child care centres for repairs necessary to meet the health and safety requirements of the child care regulations.*

#### *Operating grants*

Available to centres licensed before September 1995. In 1998, the total number was frozen: operating grants became available to a new centre or family child care home only when old funded spaces closed. This freeze was lifted April 1, 1999 so all licensed child care programs now receive an operating grant.

Operating grants are based on a point system and are provided in three categories: age and enrollment of children, training of staff, and building occupancy. Family child care homes are eligible for the enrollment and training components of the grant, but not the occupancy components.

#### Enrollment component:

- Infants	11 points
- Toddlers	7 points
- Preschoolers	5 points
- School age	4 points
- Children with special needs	11 points

#### Training component:

- Child Care Worker III	21 points
- Child Care Worker II A	16 points
- Child Care Worker II	11 points
- Child Care Worker I A	8 points
- Child Care Worker I	4 points

#### Occupancy component

- For each \$50/month spent on rent and utilities 1 point.
- For each point, \$16/month is paid to the centre or home on a quarterly basis.
- Centres and family day homes that provide a hot lunch and two snacks a day receive an additional \$25/child/ month in their operating grant.

## TERRITORIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2001)

Fee subsidies	\$2,832,085
One-time funding	30,740
Recurring funding	1,542,397
Supported child care funding	35,000
Total	\$4,440,222

### Other funding

Approximately \$19,000 was spent from the social assistance budget on child care. This included covering the cost of parent surcharges above the subsidy rates and up to three dollars an hour as a last resort after subsidy for informal care. Approximately 2,600 of the social assistance spending was on unregulated care. The Whitehorse Child Development Centre received \$900,000 to provide a range of services in regulated and unregulated child care.

## SALARIES

### **Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full- and part-time staff combined) (2000)**

Assistant teachers	\$9.97
Teachers	12.06
Teacher directors	n/a
Administrative directors	n/a

*Source: Information provided by territorial officials.*

### **Family child care**

Information not available.

## FEES

### **Median monthly parent fees for centre-based full-time care (2000)**

Infants (0-17 mos)	\$630
Toddlers (18 mos-3 yrs)	550
Preschoolers (3 yrs-5.11 yrs)	514
School-age	250

*Source: Information provided by territorial officials.*

### **Average daily fee in family child care**

Approximately the same as in centre-based care.

## ADMINISTRATION

Under the Department of Health and Social Services, the Child Care Services Unit is responsible for licensing and monitoring child care and for fee subsidy administration.

## MUNICIPAL AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

Legislation permits municipalities to hold licenses to directly operate child care programs, although none currently do so.

## CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

There is no current plan for child care development in the Yukon. New child care programs are developed on the basis of demonstrated community need.

## HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1961 A preschool playgroup was included in the activities at the Skookum Jim Memorial Hall in Whitehorse.

1968 A kindergarten program and after-school tutorial session for school-age children was established in White-horse.

1974 The Yukon Child Care Association was formed.

1979 The *Day Care Ordinance*, providing for licensing child care, was passed.

1986 Regulations were revised and operating grants introduced.

1987 A capital grant program was established.



1988 *Working Together: A Child Care Strategy for the Yukon*, a four year plan for expanding child care in the Yukon was presented by the government.

1989 The government released its strategy for the implementation of the Working Together document and the expansion of child care.

1990 Enactment of *The Child Care Act*. The First Year Review reported on the first year of the four year plan.

1992 Federal grant to Yukon College for the provision of distance early childhood education courses.

1993 The consultation process on revised regulations and proposed new guidelines (which, for the first time, will cover school-aged child care) is completed.

1995 New child care, family child care, subsidy and school-age regulations were implemented. Guidelines and policies for child care centres and family child care were published and circulated by the Department of Health and Social Services.

In addition to new spaces in non-profit centres and family day care homes, the child care fee subsidy program recognized cost of living differences between remote and less remote communities.

1999 The moratorium placed on funding in September 1995 was lifted and all licensed child care programs in the Yukon received a direct operating grant.

The territorial government gave the Yukon Child Care Association funding (\$150,000) in 1999 to apply to training and conference costs for people in the early childhood development field.

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES**

1998 A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that — based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care — the Yukon scored 4.9 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 5.2 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 4.6 on the FDCRS (family child care). (See Table 25 for elaboration.)

2001 According to territorial officials, the majority of centres do not meet the requirements for trained staff in the regulations and have been granted exemptions.

2001 Eligibility for fee subsidy was expanded and family child care providers became eligible for the hot lunch component of the operating grant.

2001 In response to the *You Bet I Care!* study, the minister of Health and Social Services asked Yukon Child Care Board to explore the Yukon results and to identify ways to improve the cognitive, language and social development of Yukon children. As a first step, the Board distributed a survey to all licensed child care programs in the fall of 2001 to explore program supports and resources needed to help children's development.

2001 Early Childhood Development Initiative allocation for the Yukon was \$300,000. \$90,000 was allocated to the Child Development Centre. The balance was allocated to the Healthy Families Initiative which provides in-home assistance and education to new parents, universal screening at birth, and intensive follow-up services where necessary.

2002 The capital budget was increased by \$50,000 for improved playground equipment and to address health and safety concerns in child care centres.

## **KEY TERRITORIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS**

Yukon Child Care Association  
P.O. Box 31710, Main Street  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 6L3  
Telephone: 867-668-2485 or 867-667-4013  
Facsimile: 867-668-3831

Society of Yukon Family Day Homes  
12 Tutshi Road  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 3R3  
Telephone: 867-668-6349  
Facsimile: 867-393-3902

## **TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

Yukon Teachers' Association  
2064-2nd Avenue  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1A9  
Telephone: 867-668-6777 or 1-866-668-2097  
Facsimile: 867-667-4324  
Website: [www.yta.yk.ca](http://www.yta.yk.ca)