

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO  
MOTION 5-17(3): EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

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**Motion:**

***NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Weledeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends:***

***that the Ministers of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services work together to bring forward proposals for new and comprehensive early childhood development programming to begin in the current fiscal year, including a plan and funding to assist communities with securing suitable space for early childhood development programs;***

***AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.***

**GNWT Response:**

The Departments of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and Health and Social Services (HSS) continue to collaborate on the overall Early Childhood Development (ECD) Plan. As part of the ECD Plan, ECE and HSS are working to renew the ECD Framework under the leadership of the Chief Public Health Officer. The renewed Framework and community stakeholder consultations are intended to be completed by end of the 2012-13 fiscal year. In particular, the departments are consulting on the ECD Framework key actions, initiatives, research, quality program development and on building the early childhood community. The ECD stakeholder consultation will be held in January 2013 with a focus on the critical years of child growth (zero to three years), brain development research, resiliency and relationships.

The Departments will also collaborate on several early childhood development initiatives such as: the community pilots of child and family resource centres in Tulita and Ndilo; the development of a two-year, on-site ECD Diploma program in early childhood development through Aurora College; an Early Childhood Community Outreach program to support existing early childhood programs in communities by enhancing program, infrastructure and staffing supports especially for children in the critical years of zero to three; an expansion of the Aboriginal Headstart programming to include three and four year olds and the development of a child care inspection manual for licenced early childhood programs.

Additionally, the Departments will continue initiatives such as: expanding the Healthy Families Program with particular emphasis on the Sahtu region where none currently exist; restructuring child and youth development funding in 2012-13 for early childhood promotion programming according to unique community needs; and developing

community wellness plans that allow communities to identify local needs and priorities including early childhood initiatives that respond to them. The Departments will continue screening for the well-baby and well-child core programs and will continue to work on the review, update and development of recommendations on Community Nursing Standards. Early childhood development screening and assessment by rehabilitations professionals and paediatricians will continue. The Departments will also integrate related work of other GNWT Social Envelope departments such as the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Furthermore, in response to the Auditor General's Report, ECE is also continuing to undertake the actions outlined in the Child Day Care Inspection and Licensing Process Action Plan to monitor compliance with the *Northwest Territories Child Day Care Act and Regulations*.

Finally, the two departments will continue to work collaboratively to strengthen healthy children and families and increase community capacity and promote healthy child development.