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FOR RELEASE #10-075

April 30, 2010

New Child and Family Services Act now in effect

WHITEHORSE – The new *Child and Family Services Act* is now in effect and replaces the 26 year-old *Children's Act*.

"This new act will have a significant impact on Yukon children and families, and those providing support for children and families," Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said. "This new legislation is more inclusive than the previous act. It provides more options and support to families and extended families to care for children, and collaborative planning processes like family conferencing to involve extended family in decision making for their children."

One considerable change with the act is the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. Beginning today any Yukoner who has reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected must inform Family and Children's Services branch, a community social worker or the RCMP. Other changes include increasing the defining age for youth from age 18 to age 19. In addition, youth leaving the child welfare system can now access supports, such as educational training and independent living skills training, up to age 24.

Under the old act, only teachers and child care workers were mandated to report suspected child abuse and youth in care were not eligible for additional services and supports past age 19.

"The act is a result of input from many community stakeholders, First Nation governments and Health and Social Services employees," Hart said. "The process began back in 2003, and we are very excited about the new direction and positive changes the new act will bring for Yukoners."

For more information on the *Child and Family Services Act*, visit the Health and Social Services website: www.hss.gov.yk.ca or call 867-393-7440.

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