FOR RELEASE
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Focus on Early Years gathering being held in Whitehorse

WHITEHORSE—Today is the first of a two-day conference focusing on the importance of supporting healthy early childhood learning development.

"The health, social-emotional well-being and education of children are essential to maintaining strong, healthy families and vibrant communities," Elaine Taylor, Minister of Education and Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, said. "This event is an excellent opportunity to learn from experts, share ideas from many contexts and listen to the valuable experiences of others."

The Early Years conference focuses on early childhood learning and development concepts and is the result of joint efforts between the departments of Education, Health and Social Services and the Women's Directorate. Three topic areas, including healthy beginnings, strong families, and quality learning and care environments, will guide the conversation. Also being discussed from a broad perspective is supporting young children, parents and families during transition into school or a community environment.

Dr. Joan Durrant, a professor at the University of Manitoba in the Family Social Sciences department and noted child psychologist and parenting expert, is among the guest speakers. Durrant is giving a free public talk this evening about positive discipline as an approach for parents to guide young children in order to build confidence, competence, and self-discipline.

"We're pleased to partner with the Department of Education and the Women's Directorate on this conference," Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said. "The early years of a child's life have a profound impact on his or her future, development, learning and well-being. This conference is one way of supporting parents and other caregivers."

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Contact:

John LeVatte
Cabinet Communications
867-633-7910
john.levatte@gov.yk.ca

Eilidh Fraser
Communications, Education
867-456-5545
eilidh.fraser@gov.yk.ca

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