

Child Development Centre

Annual General Report

June 2026



Together, we can reach the stars.

Our work is about children and families

Every family is unique. Some families come to us needing ongoing therapy support, while others arrive with questions about their child's next milestone.

This is one family's story.

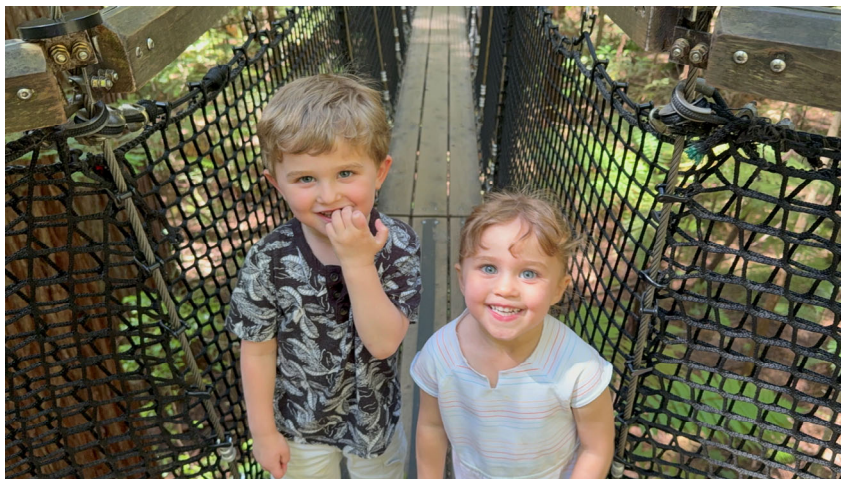
When our firstborn son, Cavell, was around 18 months old, he started displaying difficult behaviour and we weren't sure what to do. This was during COVID, and as parents we felt isolated: we were living away from our own families and hadn't yet found a network of other parents. When we mentioned our concerns to an employee at the Yukon Government's Family Resource Unit, she referred us to the Child Development Centre.

Our first contact with the CDC was with a family partner. She was approachable, accommodating, insightful and frankly outstanding from the start. We felt validated and never judged. She lived up to her title and was our partner in the journey.

Throughout our time at the CDC our son worked with a developmental therapist, pediatrician, and had a visit with an occupational therapist. We learned that parenting is not carpentry—it's gardening. There is no precise "how to" guide. You embrace your kid and their temperament as they come, watching how they perceive and play with and are frustrated by the world. Then you react as necessary. We thus learned how to respond to our son's behaviour in safe and nurturing ways, as well as picked up some useful parenting tips. Perhaps most helpful of all were the many conversations with CDC professionals who are trained to support kids in their early years.

When our second child Wrenna was born, we signed her up right away for the Follow Along program. We really enjoyed and appreciated these Follow Along visits. We saw a family partner every few months to check on development and ask any questions.

We recently moved from Whitehorse. It is bittersweet to leave the place in which our children were born. We already miss the wonderful folks at the CDC. Our connections there will always form a piece of our children, and of us.



Cavell and Wrenna.

Executive snapshot

In 2025/2026, the Child Development Centre continued delivering family-centred early intervention across Whitehorse and Yukon communities, combining therapy, family supports, early learning program coaching, diagnostic services, and community partnerships.

1371

Children seen

513

New referrals

76

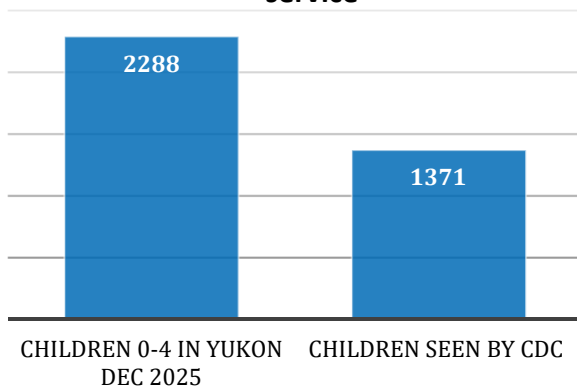
Visits to rural communities

444

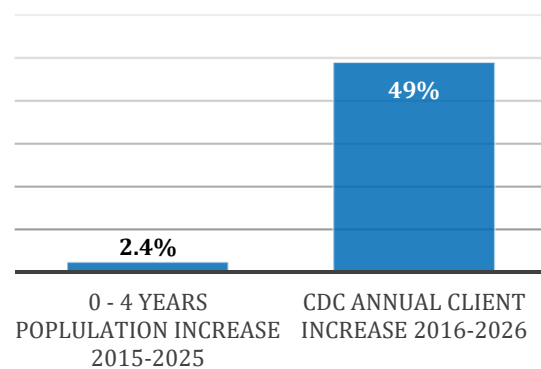
Coaching sessions at early learning centres

Population Statistics

60% of all Yukon children recieved service

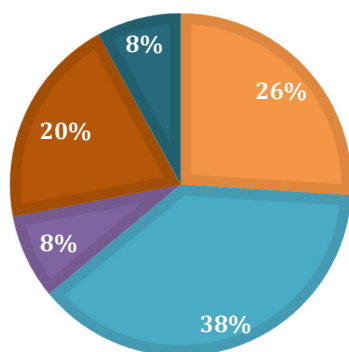


Seeing more children



WAITLISTS MAY 2026

SLP DT OT PYSCH PT



114 children waiting

Of the children we provide services to:

78%

are seen in Whitehorse

22%

are seen in rural communities

31%

identify as Indigenous

Our work

The Child Development Centre has been providing family centered therapy services for children from birth to 5 years of age since 1979, and we continue to evolve to meet the growing needs of children across the Territory.

Core funding from the Yukon Government, including support for building costs, enables the Centre to focus on service delivery. Additional funding comes through the Public Health Agency of Canada, Jordan's Principle, and community donations.

Therapies include psychology, speech-language pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and developmental/play therapy, supplemented by family partners, therapy assistants, intake and diagnostic coordination, and early learning program supports.

Referrals and services

- Parents can self-refer and were the largest source of new referrals, followed by health centres and doctors.
- We streamlined some referral pathways to better connect families with the right supports.
- Average monthly waitlist for Speech-Language Pathology decreased by 38%.
- Highest monthly caseload was 1171, which is 77 more than last year.
- Support to children and families over the summer included 24 first phone calls and 89 therapy visits.
- Training in play therapy continued, with 2 more therapists completing their required training towards registration.



Performance Measures

- Children demonstrated progress on 89% of completed goals.
- Of families surveyed:
 - 90% said they learned something from CDC they can use at home with their child.
 - 96% said their ideas and preferences were included in planning services.
 - 99% said they family's culture, values and traditions were respected during their time at CDC.
 - 88% said their child is getting what they need.
- 100% of families were called within 15 days of referral.
- 96% of families had or were offered a first visit within 35 days of referral.
- 98% of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) learned something from professional development sessions.
- 115 goals around quality inclusion were achieved by ECEs.

"I strongly feel that this will have a huge impact on my daughter's quality of life in the future."

"Staff are genuinely kind and knowledgeable."

Parent/Caregiver Survey

Services across the Yukon

Rural communities

- Teams made 76 visits to 14 communities, providing services to over 280 children and families. Several trips were cancelled due to cold weather.
- 7 early childhood therapy assistants were hired to support children between team visits; 6 of these also supported early kindergarten.
- The Dawson City family partner's work and summer support strengthened CDC's community presence, with parents noting expanded group opportunities.
- Teams strengthened engagement with Indigenous families through partnerships with community agencies.



Whitehorse

- Over 1,070 children residing in Whitehorse received services.
- 76 children attended 12 therapeutic groups focused on communication, social thinking, anxiety, and related goals.
- 92 children were supported through the transition to kindergarten, with 70 meetings scheduled with schools and families.
- Monthly CDC pediatric clinics with Dr. Smart saw 62 children.
- Over 400 children received developmental checks through the Follow Along program, a 23% increase from last year.

Community response and learning

- CDC continued to partner with many community agencies to share information and offer joint events, attending monthly events/drop-ins with 7 different organizations.
- Family partners provided lunch and learns to families over Zoom with topics such as toileting, behaviour guidance and eating.
- Hanen 'More Than Words' program was offered, supporting parents to promote social communication.
- A 'Making Connection's group for caregivers was offered with a focus on attachment and the brain.
- 'Worry Warriors' group for children experiencing anxiety, with sessions for their caregivers was provided over 6 weeks.
- Zones of Regulation for children was provided over 15 weeks and included a parent learning session once a month.
- CDC partnered with Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to provide a Play Café in Watson Lake.
- Pediatric residents and social workers came to learn about our work and tour the centre.
- One student completed a practicum with us in early learning.



Focused programs

Services for Indigenous Children

- We have a team of therapists and family partners dedicated to this program.
- Over 290 children were seen through our Kwanlin Dün and Whitehorse Indigenous Services programs.
- Nearly all children referred to this program accessed services without delay.
- 92 children were seen for developmental checks through the Follow Along program.
- The team maintained monthly community drop-ins with local partners such as the Council for Yukon First Nations Family Preservation Wellness Centre in Whistle Bend, and Kwanlin Dün First Nation Healthy Babies Healthy Generations.



Diagnostic Services

We enhanced our diagnostic assessment process to provide more efficient and responsive assessments tailored to the needs of each child and family. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce waitlist times, we began offering some diagnostic assessments during the summer months.

- 24 Autism Spectrum Disorder and two complex behaviour assessments were completed.
- 6 of these assessments were completed over the summer with the pediatrician and CDC psychologist.
- 25 children are currently waiting for assessment; 4 additional assessments are on hold.

23

New referrals

26

Assessments completed

Early Learning Program Support (ELPS)

- This team consisted of 6 inclusion coaches and one early learning support worker, with a vacancy in one position for part of the year.
- 95% of licensed centres in Whitehorse and 100% of programs in the community received ELPS support.
- 41 trips were made to 13 communities.
- Over 1000 visits were provided to centres to support ECEs in their work with individual children.
- 19 professional development sessions were offered, with 224 ECEs attending.
- CDC continued to collaborate with Early Learning and Childcare, YG, to support centres and promote quality inclusion across the territory.



Highlights

Strategic Planning: The board, leadership and leads collaborated to create a new strategic plan to guide CDC's work over the next 3 to 5 years.

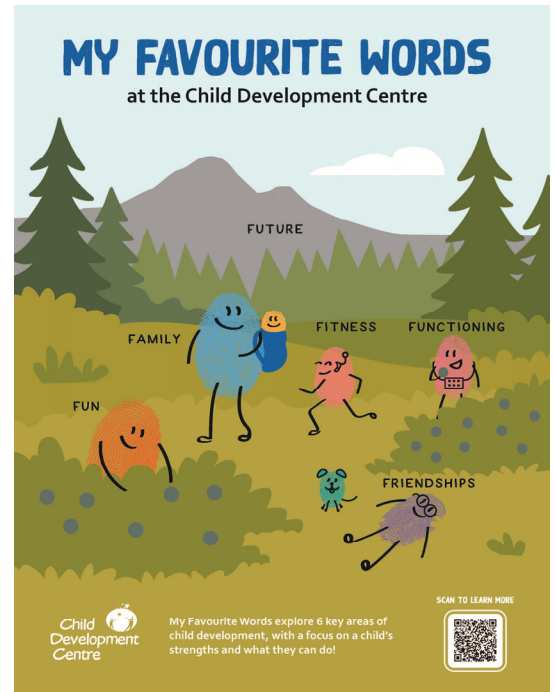
My Favourite Words: CDC implemented the My Favourite Words framework based on CanChild's "F-words for Child Development" to strengthen our approach to holistic, family-centred early intervention. Through staff training, collaboration with families and partner agencies, and the use of updated materials such as Goal Plans and Transition to Kindergarten reports; which were created with family and community input; the framework is helping guide meaningful conversations about each child's strengths, needs, relationships, and future goals.

Funding: This year, CDC secured key funding to support ongoing service delivery, including a new 3-year Transfer Payment Agreement with the Yukon Government, Jordan's Principle funding, and funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Follow Along Program Expansion: This year, CDC expanded the Follow Along Program, which is designed to help families understand their child's development, identify early signs of developmental concerns, and connect with supports when needed. The expansion strengthens continuity of care in Whitehorse and rural Yukon communities by extending age eligibility, allowing families to stay connected with trusted CDC staff longer when needed, and creating more opportunities for parent learning and connection.

Inclusion Series Workshop: The Early Learning Program Support coaches developed an innovative series of inclusion workshops targeting specific neuro-affirming strategies and environments. Sessions were well attended and included community participation.

Local Community Professional Development: Community practitioners came together with CDC for training through the Rocky Mountain Play Therapy Institute to learn play therapy for children of separation and divorce. Therapists also attended BC Children's Hospital training in Whitehorse on pediatric pain management, alongside doctors and other frontline health practitioners.



\$1.8M

Jordan's Principle funding secured.

\$236K

Community Action Program for Prenatal and Child Health Program (CAPCHP) funding for 4 years.

Looking ahead

Working with IRP Consulting: As part of our Strategic Plan, we will work collaboratively with IRP Consulting to gather feedback that will help inform and improve our services for Indigenous children and families. This work will support more culturally responsive approaches to service planning and access to care. This collaboration will also support staff in learning about and respectfully including First Nations ways of knowing and being into services for families.

Jordan's Principle: CDC will again apply for Jordan's Principle funding to help ensure Indigenous children and families continue to receive timely, meaningful services.

Diagnostic Services: In collaboration with Yukon Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (YSPOR), we have launched a project to better understand the experiences of Yukon children and families as they move through the Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnostic assessment process. This work will help identify opportunities to strengthen our approach and care pathways by building on best practices, family and staff feedback, and learnings from comparable regions across Canada over the next few years.

Entry into Services: We will continue to review and streamline entry into services so that families are connected with the right supports at the right time.

Transdisciplinary Work: In the year ahead, we will focus on strengthening our transdisciplinary practice skills and processes so that children and families experience services that are coordinated, responsive and meaningful. We aim to provide the right level of support in a way that feels clear and manageable for families, while bringing therapeutic services together as part of a connected and collaborative approach.

Supported Child Care: Supporting children in the community is the result of the collective efforts of many partners. Looking ahead, we will work with Early Learning and Child Care to further develop and enhance the services CDC can contribute to this important program.

Collective Agreement: With collective bargaining coming to a close, the Board of Directors will work with funders to ensure the agreement's obligations are met and wage gaps continue to narrow.



In conclusion

As we reflect on the past year, I want to recognize the people and partnerships that make this work possible. To the families we serve, thank you for your trust and willingness to work together with us to support your children's growth and development. To our staff, thank you for the dedication, expertise, and compassion you bring each day, and for the many ways you go above and beyond for children, families, and communities across the territory.

I also want to acknowledge our partners and funders; whose collaboration and investment help strengthen our services and broaden our impact. To our Board of Directors, thank you for your thoughtful guidance, leadership, and continued commitment to our mission.

As this will be my final annual report before retirement, I feel especially grateful for the opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made together. It has been a privilege to be part of this work and to witness the care, commitment, and collaboration that continue to shape services for Yukon children and families. I am proud of our ongoing commitment to learning, growing, and doing better, and I look forward to seeing this important work continue in the years ahead.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the long service and contributions of Katie Cheung (10 years), Michelle King (10 years), Emily Gayda (5 years), Joanne Heyes (5 years), Kevin Monk (5 years), Mallory Thomas (5 years) and Miriam Parker (5 years). Yukon families and children have benefitted from your support and professionalism.

Respectfully submitted by Alayne Squair, Executive Director