

Student Support Services Parent Handbook



Cover art supplied by an elementary student from Watson Lake

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Working Together as Partners in Education

The *Yukon Education Act* promotes the active involvement of parents. As parents, you know your child best. You know your child's unique and individual strengths, abilities, developmental capacities and challenges, and as a result you are a valuable resource to everyone who comes in contact with your child. You are your child's greatest supporter.

Your ongoing involvement and support in the school can make a positive, meaningful difference in your child's success. The information you share is critical to planning, implementing and adjusting programs to best meet your child's changing needs.

To participate confidently and knowledgeably in planning your child's education, you should be informed. This handbook is a tool to assist you in understanding educational issues and structures within the school system to support your child.

This handbook presents information also found in the Yukon Education Student Support Services Manual. Some material has been adapted from provincial publications as per the sharing agreement of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP).

The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs. Alberta Education. 2003.

Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School. Manitoba Education, Citizens and Youth. 2004.

Actualizing a Needs Based Model to Support Student Achievement. Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. 2011.

Every effort has been made to properly acknowledge original sources and, where we have adapted material, to remain true to the content and spirit of the original. Any error is the responsibility of the authors of this manual, and every effort will be made to correct it. To suggest changes or corrections, direct any questions or comments to:

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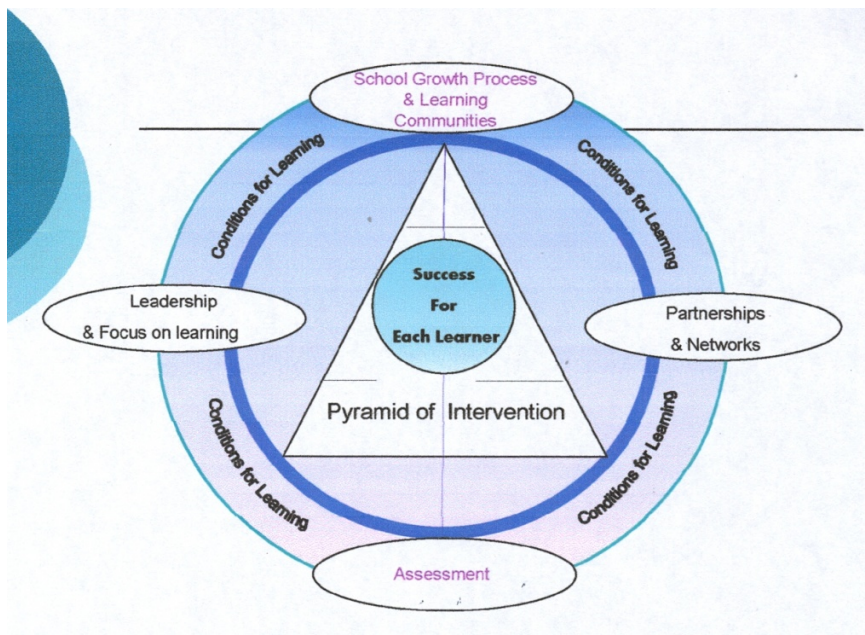
I. Introduction

What do I need to understand about Yukon schools?

The preamble to *The Yukon Education Act* outlines the guiding principles for education. Several sections of the Act may be of particular interest to parents of students with special educational needs. In Part 3 of *The Yukon Education Act*, the responsibilities of the education system towards these students are described. The procedures for designating a student as having exceptional needs and the decision-making processes can also be found in Part 3 of *The Yukon Education Act*. See the website for more information:

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/acts/education.pdf>

Yukon Education Accountability Framework



The *Yukon Education Accountability Framework* demonstrates the vision of “Success for Each Learner” based on *The Yukon Education Act*. The Accountability Framework has accompanying policies and procedural documents. Each element also represents one of the

significant themes addressed in the Education Reform document: assessment and programming, leadership and partnership, accountability and planning. It ensures a planning cycle is followed and that decisions are made based on evidence and data.

Yukon Education – Guiding Principles

Yukon Education establishes the curriculum and philosophy of education for all Yukon schools. The sense of belonging to the school community where everyone is accepted and supported by all members of the community is the paramount goal of Yukon Education. Every effort will be made by schools to provide support so that students can achieve their goals in the classroom.

Consideration is given to respecting:

- Yukon First Nations linguistic and cultural diversity, traditional knowledge, cultural practices, histories and languages;
- Elders' and seniors' knowledge as being integral to the transmission of language and culture;
- the diversity of all multicultural heritages of Canada;
- the community's values: respect, love, sharing, caring, teaching;
- other identifiable minority or cultural groups.

Consideration is given to recognizing:

- that education is life-long learning;
- the importance of the philosophy of inclusive education;
- the involvement of community in education;
- the importance of traditional knowledge, cultural practices, histories and languages;
- the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with partners and communities;
- the importance of honesty, integrity and accountability; and
- the importance of effective communication.

What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education provides the student with the least restrictive and most enabling environment to meet learning needs while enabling meaningful participation with other students. Inclusion of all students in regular classrooms is the goal of Yukon Education.

All students are entitled to equitable access to learning. Inclusion requires collaborative planning by an educational team with you, as parents, as active participants. This means that the student's strengths and challenges are central to all decisions. To succeed, some students may require adaptations in methodology, materials or assessment techniques; modifications or enhancements to programs; or interventions to assist skill development. This is a student-centred approach to teaching and learning.

Core values and beliefs as practiced in Yukon schools include:

- All students can learn.
- Students learn in different ways, at different rates and in different places.
- Students come from diverse backgrounds and want their differences to be respected.
- Students have the right to appropriate educational programming and required supports.
- Parental involvement is essential.

Inclusive schools encourage independence by providing opportunities that promote personal empowerment and self-determination.

Partnerships

Partnerships between educators, parents, students, and community including First Nations support all students in achieving success in Yukon schools and in life. Such partnerships start with a shared mission and vision and develop over time. They are nurtured by mutual

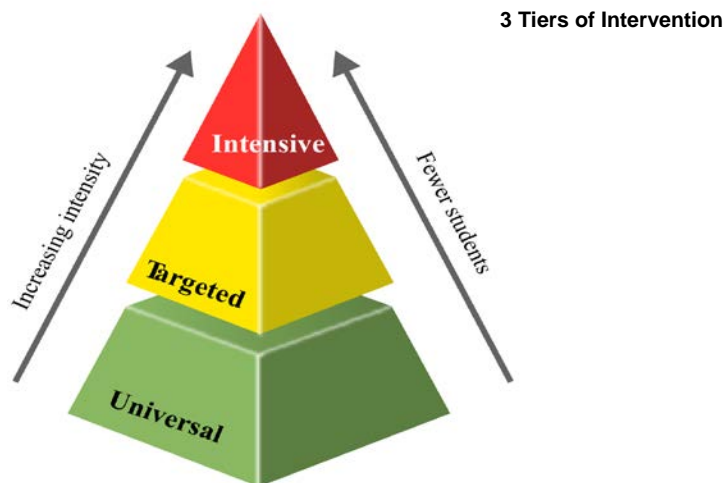
trust and respect. Partnerships expand available knowledge and resources to deliver a variety of educational experiences, programs, services and supports for all students. Parents are essential partners in the education of their children wherever education occurs: at home, in the school, in the community, and on the land.

What is the Pyramid of Intervention Framework?

The Pyramid of Intervention is a problem-solving framework used in all Yukon schools to implement procedures and practices to support students. In addition to universal classroom practices that will meet many students' needs, some students will require targeted supports to be successful. A small number of students will require an individual education plan that is specific to their learning needs. This model provides a common language to address student needs.

There are three tiers of responsive instruction and interventions including: classroom-based school-wide interventions, targeted interventions and intensive individual interventions.

Pyramid of Intervention



Tier 1 of the Pyramid of Intervention represents interventions for most students which are often addressed in the regular classroom. Students learn at different rates and in a variety of ways using their own learning styles and multiple intelligences. Tier 1 reflects **universal** interventions and differentiated instruction within each classroom. For example, teachers might allow more time for tests or choose materials better suited to a student's learning style.

Tier 2 of the Pyramid of Intervention includes universal strategies and interventions that target the specific learning needs of a student. The classroom teacher and Learning Assistance Teacher monitor the student's response to the intervention in collaboration with the School Based Team (SBT). Collaborative planning for students coordinates a range of resources and strategies that provide them the best opportunity for achievement.

Tier 3 of the Pyramid of Intervention includes interventions used at tier 1 and 2 and more intensive interventions. The student's program is developed in consultation with the School Based Team and Student Support Services staff and may be implemented by the classroom teacher, Learning Assistance Teacher and possibly additional support staff.

II. Building Relationships

The following section describes who works in the school system to support students with special educational needs.

Who's who in my child's school?

School-Based Support Personnel: Roles and Responsibilities

School Administration

School administrators are responsible for the overall operation of the school. The administrator fulfills an important role in identifying and ensuring the appropriate education of students with special educational needs. He or she reviews the implementation of programs and services for those students. The administrator can be a source of information and is an important member of your child's team.

Teachers

Teachers are the first line of support for students experiencing difficulties, requiring additional supports or enrichment. It is important that teachers, students and parents share information and develop supportive, trusting relationships to enable student learning. Teachers are part of the collaborative process in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of students' Student Learning Plans, Behaviour Support Plans and/or Individual Education Plans. Teachers document student progress and provide feedback to parents and students throughout the school year. Teachers are responsible for making inclusiveness a classroom norm.

Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT)

The Learning Assistance Teacher is a teacher who specializes in providing coordinated and integrated student support services. Learning Assistance Teachers are involved in consulting, collaborative planning, evaluating and reporting progress, and delivering specialized instruction, as well as support within the classroom and in other settings. They may also guide training as necessary for Educational Assistants and Remedial Tutors, volunteers and peer tutors in effective intervention procedures for the student. Learning Assistance Teachers are often the IEP case manager and assist in facilitating smooth transitions.

School Counsellor

A school counsellor is an experienced teacher and may have additional specialist qualifications in counselling. The counsellor may provide social and emotional support for students experiencing challenges as well as promoting the educational, social, emotional and career development of students. School counsellors can be involved in the planning process assisting with the development of Student Learning Plans, Behaviour Support Plans and Individual Education Plans.

Educational Assistant and Remedial Tutor

Educational Assistants and Remedial Tutors work with classroom teachers, Learning Assistance Teachers (LATs), and Student Support Services staff in the implementation of programming. The assistance required will vary according to the individual needs of the student(s) and may include direct or indirect support.

Under the guidance of the classroom teacher and/or Learning Assistance Teacher, paraprofessional support may:

- provide specific educational, behavioural, social and life skills activities;
- provide personal assistance, specialized programming, assistance in using assistive technology, self and/or health care;
- assist students in working toward greater autonomy;
- work with individuals or groups in a practice or intervention activity;
- reinforce concepts presented by the teacher;
- monitor student responses or activities, collecting data and providing regular feedback to the teacher.

What is a School Based Team?

The School Based Team is a collaborative problem-solving unit. It consists of a core group of regular members including the school administrator, the Learning Assistance Teacher and possibly a school counsellor. The referring classroom/subject teacher is a key member when his/her student is being discussed. Invited members may include the student's parent(s) and/or Student Support Services staff.

The School Based Team facilitates the implementation of case management, referrals and school resource decisions. The Team meets regularly to assist classroom and/or subject teachers to develop and implement instructional strategies that support student learning.

Who else can support my child?

Yukon Education Student Support Services Staff

The Student Support Services staff and itinerant teachers work with school-based personnel to provide collaborative, multi-disciplinary support to students, school personnel, families and communities throughout the territory.

Typically, their responsibilities include:

- consulting with teachers and parents regarding student program development, intervention and evaluation;
- providing classroom observations;
- being part of the School Based Team as requested;
- participating on IEP teams for students with special educational needs;
- assessing individual students to assist educational programming and intervention;
- providing oral feedback to the student, parents, teacher and the School Based Team followed by a written report;
- delivering professional development for school staff, parents and/or community.

School Psychologist

School Psychologists work with teachers, parents and students to:

- identify and address learning and behaviour difficulties that interfere with school success;

- provide recommendations and when possible, participate in individual student program planning meetings and reviews;
- conduct individual assessments such as classroom observation, file review, meeting with the classroom teacher and parents, and the administration of standardized tests;
- create positive classroom environments to increase achievement by assessing barriers to learning and helping plan the instructional strategies for improvement.

School Psychologists play an essential role in the assessment and identification of students with special educational needs and a supportive role in the planning and implementation of Individual Education Plans. Assessment data is used for planning, goal setting, and developing interventions and strategies.

Speech and Language Consultants

Speech and Language Consultants are Speech-Language Pathologists who work in schools across all grade levels to address the communication needs of students. They consult with school personnel and parents on the implications that speech, language, literacy and social communication differences have on students' educational success. They offer appropriate strategies, resources and adaptations for the unique communication needs of students.

Communication Assistant

Communication Assistants are paraprofessionals with post-secondary training as a therapy assistant and/or are trained by Speech and Language Consultants. They support the implementation of intervention programs designed by the Speech and Language Consultants to improve students' speech, language and communication skills.

Physiotherapist

Physiotherapists consult with staff, students and families to encourage maximum motor development to facilitate learning and integration in the school environment. Physiotherapists provide services to encourage the development of age appropriate motor skills. These services may include assistance in positioning to promote optimal physical access, assistance in maximizing independence for students who have limited mobility, and prevention and/or alleviation of movement dysfunction.

Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists consult to promote functional skills within the school environment. They assess the student, environment and task, and strategize to optimize function. The functional tasks of students include self-care, play and school productivity. An occupational therapist can assess the specific areas of hand development, visual-perception and sensory processing.

Itinerant Behaviour Support Teacher

The Behaviour Support Teacher provides support within collaborative school teams to help determine the function(s) of observed behaviour in students and to support school staff in writing Positive Behaviour Support Plans. The Behaviour Support Teacher provides training to school staff in the areas of positive behaviour supports, classroom management, safety planning, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®, functional behaviour assessment and behaviour support planning. When student needs require collaborative planning with community supports and other government departments, the Behaviour Support Teacher liaisons with the school and these other supports.

Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides direct service to students with hearing loss and consultative service to schools, teachers and parents to develop effective programming and supports for the student.

Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired is a specialist teacher with training in the education of blind and visually impaired students. This teacher provides support to blind and low vision students and respective teachers at all grade levels with aids and equipment, program modification and other services.

Home Support Teacher

The Home Support Teacher offers short-term support to students completing their education while absent from school for extended periods of time because of medical reasons.

Consultation & Assessment: How does the process work?

As parents, you should be informed and consulted, if the School Based Team directs the Learning Assistance Teacher or the school counsellor to collect additional information on your child. This may include observing and interviewing your child, the teacher and you. The counsellor may ask you or the teacher to complete checklists and/or rating scales as appropriate.

Assessment by Student Support Services Staff

The School Based Team may request formal involvement of Student Support Services staff when a student continues to have significant academic or behaviour difficulty with the implementation of school based interventions. Student Support Services staff will observe and consult informally or perform formal assessments. Both informal and formal assessments have the same goal: to better understand a student's strengths and needs and to plan effectively.

In the assessment phase, Student Support Services staff will initially review student records, interview school staff, parents and the student and/or observe the student in the classroom. They may work with the student directly to complete formal standardized assessments and provide recommendation for educational planning.

Informed consent means that the legal guardian have a clear understanding of the activity for which they are granting consent. You have the right to decline consent for any proposed specialized assessment. If this happens, the school must document the reasons for the refusal and actions taken to resolve concerns. You may withdraw consent at any time.

When the assessment results for your child are determined, the Learning Assistance Teacher will contact you and arrange a meeting with the staff who participated in the assessment to explain the results, discuss the recommendations, and involve you in making any related decisions. This report will be shared with others, including the School Based Team and, if appropriate, the student. This information is the foundation for planning. Student Support Services staff will interpret and communicate

assessment findings to you, the student and staff in a timely manner in accordance with the provisions of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP)*.

What should I do if issues arise?

As a parent of a child with special needs, you will be making decisions throughout your child's education. When you have questions or concerns about your child's programming, it is important to start a discussion with those involved. This means meeting with your child's classroom teacher, Learning Assistance Teacher or School Based Team. Be sure to indicate your concerns to allow for the appropriate allotment of time for the meeting.

Focus on:

- ✓ *your child's best interests*
- ✓ *obtaining a clear understanding of the situation*
- ✓ *exploring all options*
- ✓ *examining all ideas and suggestions*
- ✓ *finding a solution*

If the concern cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to request a meeting with the school administrator. Let the administrator know your concerns and that you have discussed this issue with the teacher. The teacher(s) should also participate in the meeting with the administrator. Student Support Services staff may also be called upon to provide information and support in resolving the concern.

It is preferable to work out agreements collaboratively at the school level. However, if the issues cannot be resolved at school, you or the school

administrator may discuss concerns with the superintendent and/or Director, Student Support Services at Yukon Education. You may request an appeal through the Education Appeal Tribunal, a statutory body created by section 157 of *The Yukon Education Act*. The Tribunal functions as a board independent of the Government. It hears appeals of decisions made by Yukon Education, school councils or schools. *For further information see Education Dispute Resolution Policy, Records File # 3500-31-1008, Draft Policy 2009 on website.*

III. Planning and Reporting

How Is learning assessed, evaluated and reported?

Students with special educational needs are provided with progress reports on the same schedule as their classmates. When a student is expected to achieve or surpass the learning outcomes set out in the curriculum, regular grading practices are followed. Even if adapted assessment methods are used, the student is assessed using the curriculum standards.

Reporting procedures explain the range of adaptations and modifications:

- a regular program with some adaptations;
- regular program but with some modified components;
- a completely modified program.

If your child is not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of the grade/course, substantial modifications may be necessary and your child will have individual goals set out as part of planning. Informal reporting may include other procedures such as daily logs.

How does the teacher assess what my child needs?

It is important to identify a student's learning needs early. Some students will have identified needs before they enter school. In these cases, it's helpful for you to share this information with the school when you register your child. If your child is having difficulty learning, the first step is to talk to the classroom teacher to determine what might be causing these difficulties and decide if there are any small changes that can improve the situation.

Classroom Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of regular activity in every classroom.

Examples of assessments teachers may use:

Questioning	Informal Checklists
Discussions	Observations
Learning Activities	Work Samples
Feedback	Assessment Portfolios
Conferences	Teacher Designed Tests
Interviews	Curriculum-based Assessments
Student Reflections	Performance Standards
File Review	School-wide Testing

Program Planning: What kind of programming is available?

Planning makes connections and is ongoing. It connects the family with the school team to set and meet goals. As your child's needs change, plans should change; as goals are met, new goals are set. Planning is part of the educational process.

Differentiated Instruction: Teachers respond to different learning needs among students by differentiating their classroom teaching. Teachers will often vary their teaching methods or approaches when planning daily lessons, when working with students in the classroom, and when assessing student progress.

Adaptation: When a student is capable of meeting the learning goals or outcomes of the Yukon curriculum but needs a different type of instruction or assessment or physical accommodation, adaptations may be used. Adaptation means changing the teaching process, the types of materials, and/or the assignments or products a student may produce. The student is still required to meet the prescribed learning outcomes of the curriculum.

Modification: Some students with special educational needs may have significant learning difficulties such that they cannot meet curriculum prescribed learning outcomes. Modification means that the content of the curriculum outcomes changes to meet a student's learning needs. It is important that a student's team discuss why and how the modifications are being made. Parents need to be informed and involved in the discussion.

It is important to know that a student may move between adapted and modified programming.

What do I need to know to plan for school graduation or completion?

There are three possible scenarios for a secondary student:

1. Grade 12 Graduation Certificate.
2. School Completion Certificate with modified learning outcomes.
3. A student is taking some regular courses and also working on some modified outcomes to receive a School Completion Certificate. The student can continue to work on Graduation requirements beyond Grade 12.

At the secondary level, there is flexibility in the courses available to meet many students' diverse needs. As a parent, you closely examine all the course offerings when scheduling courses to be consistent with the program plan for the student.

Yukon follows the British Columbia Program of Studies and, therefore, the BC requirements for secondary school graduation. Successful completion of a graduation-level education program is recognized through the awarding of a Yukon Secondary School Graduation Certificate. Beginning in Grade 10, there are specific courses that students are required to pass in order to graduate.

School Completion Certificates are provided to recognize the accomplishments of students who have succeeded in meeting the goals of their specific educational program. They are intended to recognize the accomplishments of students with special educational needs who complete the goals and objectives stated in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Are adaptations made to exams?

The adjudication process supports students who have special educational needs by allowing changes to the exam conditions. The content of exams is not altered in this process. Eligible students may be allowed extra time, may receive an adapted exam format and/or may use alternate means of recording their responses to exam questions. If you have questions regarding this, please talk to the teacher or school administrator.

Students with Special Learning Needs and School Completion

<u>Adaptations</u>	<u>Modifications</u>
<p>For students whose learning outcomes are within grade/course level expectations of the prescribed curriculum. Changes are made to the teaching process, learning environment, materials, time demands, assistance, evaluation.</p> <p>Teaching methods, materials and/or evaluation methods are adapted and identified in the Student Learning Plan or IEP.</p> <p>Standard report cards issued. Credits earned for course work completed.</p> <p>May be awarded a Graduation Certificate.</p>	<p>For students whose learning outcomes are different from or in addition to the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs). The individualized learning goals and outcomes are different than that of a course or subject.</p> <p>Individualized, personalized goals are developed and stated in the IEP.</p> <p>Reports include structured written comments to report the level of the student's success in achieving the objectives outlined in the IEP.</p> <p>May receive a School Completion Certificate after meeting the goals of the IEP.</p>

In Grades 10 to 12, the adaptations must be documented in the student's file if adjudication is required for the B.C. provincial exams. Ongoing adaptations must be described and documented on an Individual Education Plan to verify adaptations were in place during the instruction of the course.

Students on modified programs **do not** require adjudication assessments because they do not write provincial exams.

IV. Learning Plans

What is a Student Learning Plan and who needs one?

A Student Learning Plan is a document that identifies adaptations for learning difficulties or enrichment strategies required for success. These adaptations help the student to meet the prescribed learning outcomes. The teacher, assisted by the Learning Assistance Teacher or counsellor, develops the Student Learning Plan. The Student Learning Plan represents good teaching strategies without changing the prescribed learning outcomes.

The key to the success of a Student Learning Plan is ongoing and open communication between the student, parent and teacher. You and your child should have a clear understanding of:

- the student's strengths in the various subject areas in relation to the grade level or prescribed learning outcomes;
- the strategies the teacher will use to help the student improve performance or add breadth and depth to the learning experiences.

Exit from a Student Learning Plan

If a student has met the identified goals and no longer requires the adaptations to meet prescribed learning outcomes, the Student Learning Plan is considered complete. The School Based Team notes the final decision in their team's meeting minutes. You will be informed that your child no longer requires a Student Learning Plan.

What is an Individual Education Plan?

An Individual Education Plan is a documented plan that outlines the educational program for a student as determined by a School Based Team. It is a working document that is used on a daily basis in inclusive classrooms. It is a record of student progress. An Individual Education Plan is developed through a collaborative team effort involving the student, parents, teachers and resource personnel. The individuals involved may change over time depending on the needs of the student. The team develops goals based on a student's current needs and skills and writes the plan for the school year in the student's Individual Education Plan. This is reviewed three times per year.

What must an Individual Education Plan contain?

Learning outcomes are described as high and attainable goals and objectives. The objectives are developed using the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-related). The purpose of an IEP is to provide a plan to help your child meet individual learning goals. For this reason, an understanding of what the student's abilities are is essential to the individual education planning process.

How can parents support Individual Education Plan planning?

Meetings may be arranged by teachers, parents, principals or other school support staff for a variety of reasons. Sometimes meetings might make you feel anxious, especially when it is about your child. It is important that teachers and support staff learn from you how to best work with our child. It is also important for you to hear the perspective of the teacher so that together you can plan to create the best learning

opportunities for your child. You have the right to ask questions and bring forward any concerns you have or your child has.

Keep in mind that the outcome of such meetings can be very positive and helpful to your child's learning. The focus should always be on what is best for your child. You can ask if staff will meet with you outside the school, at the First Nation office, your home or some other place where you might be comfortable. Here are a few things you can do to feel more prepared and have successful meetings.

Before the meeting:

- ✓ Make sure you understand the purpose of the meeting. If you ask for the meeting, tell others you will be meeting with why you want to speak with them. If the meeting has been organized by someone else, ask for an agenda and ask if any decisions are to be made. If so, ask what kind of decisions.
- ✓ Think about what questions you might have and consider writing these down to take with you. This may help you to stay focused and can be a good reminder.
- ✓ Find out who will be attending the meeting and what role they will play.
- ✓ Consider inviting a person along who can support you, be another listener and perhaps take notes if you don't want to do so, especially if you are concerned about serious issues that could be difficult to discuss.
- ✓ When possible and desired, both parents and others they may wish to invite should attend the meeting. This may mean the meeting time will have to be adjusted to be workable for all involved.

At the meeting:

- ✓ If you do not understand any of the information presented by school staff or others in the meeting, ask them to go over it again. Ask questions to make sure you understand what is being said. Ask them to speak simply and not use language and expressions that are difficult to follow.
- ✓ Be patient but also assertive and clear about what your child needs, and also about what you need.
- ✓ Always aim to find solutions to challenges.
- ✓ Before you leave, review any decisions that were made during the meeting.
- ✓ Take extra time if you need it. Agree to meet again if needed. Do not feel rushed.
- ✓ Ask for minutes of the meeting to be recorded. It is also a good practice to take your own notes.
- ✓ Make sure you understand what will happen next. Make sure you know who is responsible for any actions to be taken.
- ✓ Make sure that everyone agrees to respect confidentiality.
- ✓ Set another time to review and monitor progress.

After the meeting:

- ✓ Think about whether you are satisfied with the information you were given at the meeting and about any decisions made.
- ✓ Go over the notes you have. If you do not understand something, contact someone who was at the meeting and ask for an explanation again.
- ✓ Make sure you are clear about what happens next. If you are unsure about this, call and ask for the information again.

- ✓ It may be advisable for you to write a letter to those who were at the meeting to outline your understanding of any decisions that were made, to state whether you agree with them or not and what your understanding is of what will happen next. Keep a copy of the letter.

It is important that you ask as many questions as you need to throughout the whole meeting process, from planning to completion. Make sure you have the information you need to feel informed and to make decisions about your child.

Reporting will reflect the progress in relation to the goals in the Individual Education Plan. In some cases, structured written comments will be used to report on the success in achieving these goals and objectives describing:

- the student's achievement;
- the areas in which the student requires further attention or development; and
- the ways of supporting the student's learning, in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the Individual Education Plan.

Your child's role in the Individual Education Plan meeting

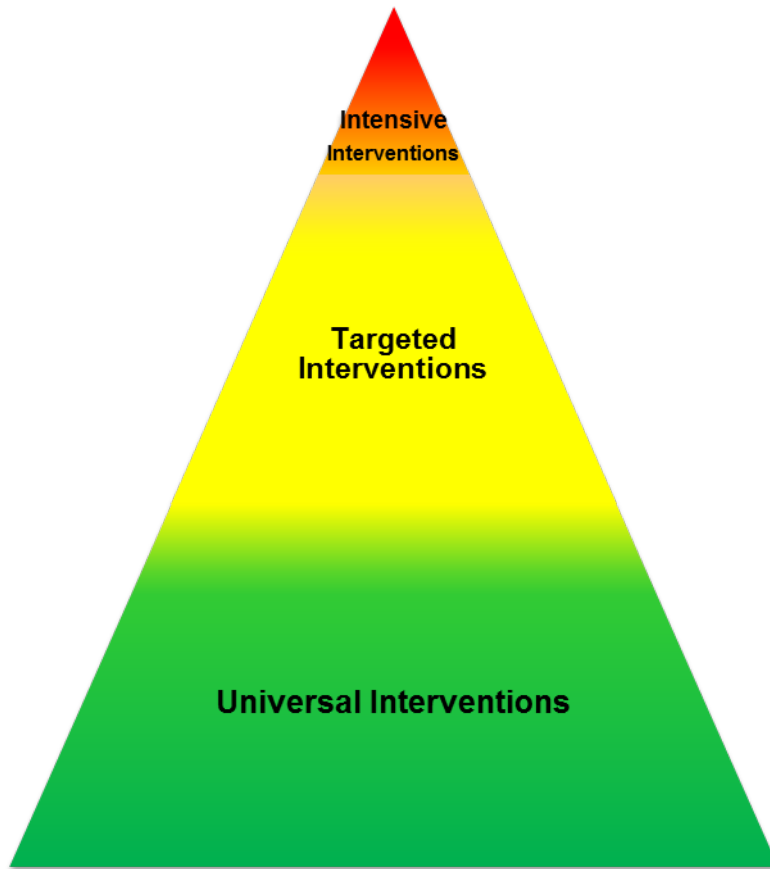
While students are not required to attend their Individual Education Plan meeting, you may want to include your child to foster ownership of learning. He or she may want to share goals or areas of need personally.

What happens when social emotional difficulties affect learning?

Everyone in the school has the right to be safe to work and learn. Each school in the Yukon, with input from students, staff and parents, has adopted school-wide behaviour expectations. At the beginning of each school year, students, staff and parents are informed about appropriate behaviour expectations, the process of intervention and positive reinforcement, student discipline and appropriate social skills.

School staff and the school community support positive behaviours by having clearly stated expectations. School-wide and classroom-wide positive behaviour supports include consistency in expectations of behaviour with clearly stated consequences for unexpected behaviour. Each staff member is responsible for explicitly teaching the expectations of their classrooms and schools.

Some students require small group or individual support to improve their behaviour. Approaches to handling challenging behaviour require consistent efforts in various settings such as the school, home or community. When a child displays serious challenging behaviour at school, a strong partnership between the school and your family is beneficial to maximize the effectiveness of behaviour intervention strategies.



How is a Behaviour Support Plan used?

A Behaviour Support Plan is used to record targeted and/or intense interventions and positive supports for behaviour for an individual and/or group of students who demonstrate and/or are diagnosed with behaviour difficulties.

Staff supporting the student(s) will collaborate to identify, implement and monitor behavioural interventions and changes to the student's environment in order to reduce, change or eliminate the unexpected behaviour in the school environment.

Information from parents is critical when designing a Behaviour Support Plan. Your information may include observations of and insights into your child's behaviour at home and in the community, your child's preferences and strengths, information regarding any medical issues, and descriptions of the home environment and family routines.

The Behaviour Support Plan can include a range of options such as:

- teaching the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviours;
- rearranging the environment so that problems can be prevented and desirable behaviours can be encouraged; and
- monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing the plan over time.

Students who are not responsive to these targeted interventions may be referred by the School Based Team to Student Support Services for further consultation and assessment from the specialists in specific areas of difficulty.

What happens when my child changes teachers, classrooms or schools?

Your child will experience significant transitions throughout his or her education from home or day-care to kindergarten, from class to class, school to school, from community to community and from school to post-secondary or work situations. These transitions almost always involve changes in locations, expectations, rules and services as well as peer groups, staff and/or life-style. The transition process for a student with special educational needs requires careful planning to ensure that programming and supports move with him or her. An IEP meeting is the logical and practical place to plan with the student and school staff to

ease these transitions. When the transition is between schools, staff from both schools should be involved.

Planning for the Future

It is important to identify your child's strengths, abilities and talents, and incorporate them into programming decisions. You should also help your child identify dreams and hopes for the future. Talk to your child about his or her thoughts on post-secondary training, entering the work force, options for living situations, and the kinds of recreational and leisure activities he/she would like in the future. You also need to determine your own realistic wishes and preferences for your child and develop a family vision for the future. This is especially important in planning for the transition between secondary school and an independent adult life.

Transition planning

Transition planning involves identifying the kinds of skills students need to be successful in future settings and then developing a plan of action to ensure this happens.

Transition planning decisions should be based on an understanding of the individual. This means understanding your child's strengths, needs and goals, as well as those of your family. Transition planning should be flexible and ongoing since preferences and needs may change over time.

Successful transitions involve input from the whole learning team, including parents, children, teachers and possibly community based personnel such as career counsellors or post-secondary school admission officers. Drawing on the knowledge of various team members

makes for informed decision-making, the acceptance of common responsibility and a generous circle of support for your child. Transition planning should focus on helping him or her to develop skills for decision-making.

Successful transitions depend on:

- early and systematic planning;
- identifying hopes and dreams;
- using appropriate strategies to help your child move from one stage to the next;
- accessing resources in the community.

Bridging from One Stage to the Next

Transitions may be a challenging time for your child. You are a constant factor as your child moves from one setting to another. Because you know your child best, you will be aware of the areas where your child needs further support and reinforcement to cope with new challenges. This could include strengthening self-advocacy and decision-making skills, independent problem solving and positive feelings about their abilities.

Children in transition need to know that there are support systems in place for them when they face personal or academic difficulties.

Reassure your child that there will be teachers or employers ready to support him or her. Involve siblings, extended family members, friends, neighbours or others who can contribute to your child's successful transition.

IV. What do these terms mean?

Achievement Tests assess students' skill development in academic content areas. Achievement tests measure the extent to which a student has profited from instruction and life experiences compared to others of the same age or grade.

Adaptations are changes made to the teaching process, learning environment, materials, time demands, assistance, evaluation or student products that help students achieve the learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum.

Appeals are timely, fair and open processes that protect the rights of students and parents and address differences of opinion about the education of a student.

Assessment is a systematic process of gathering information about what and how a student has learned. Through analysis, decisions are made to improve learning. It is a collaborative and progressive process designed to identify the student's strengths and areas of need, set goals, and results in the identification and implementation of instructional planning. This process involves assessment for, as, and of learning.

Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a step by step plan that provides key information about a student's behaviour. It is used to help staff who work with the student to provide positive supports to help the student increase their engagement. The Behaviour Support Plan contains

preventative practices (designed to adapt or modify the environment addressing the antecedents and consequences that are triggering /maintaining the behaviour) and, replacement or alternative behaviour(s) that are taught and reinforced. It is implemented for about 4 to 6 weeks, continually monitored through progress assessments and then evaluated based on the results of the data collected and the student's response to the intervention(s).

Consultation is a process in which parents, school staff and appropriate others share information relevant to the student's educational program.

Collaborative Consultation is an interactive process in which people with a particular expertise work together to solve a common problem or address a common concern, to generate an appropriate program or process or find solutions to problems. A successful collaboration process is voluntary, involves mutual trust and open communication, and results in identification/clarification of the problem to be addressed. Each participant's contribution and participation are valued equally.

Data Collection is a process that involves the collection of evidence to determine effective specific programming for student achievement (academic/behaviour). Data may be collected by informal means (teacher-made tests, observation, interview, work sample analysis, etc.) and formal means (the use of norm referenced standardized tests). Curriculum-based assessment is a valuable part of the assessment process. Data/evidence may also be solicited from other professionals.

Differentiated Instruction is a way of teaching that acknowledges and responds to the differences among students. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to support student learning and to help each student be as successful as possible.

Diversity reflects a philosophy of equitable participation and appreciation of the contributions of all people. It is a concept that refers both to our uniqueness as individuals and to our sense of belonging or identification within a group or groups. Some of these differences may be more visible than others.

Exceptional or Special Educational Needs are identified during assessment. These needs are the basis for an appropriate educational program that is documented and outlined in an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) as determined by school administration in consultation with professional staff (School Based Team and Student Support Services consultants), parents and possibly students.

Functional Behavioural Assessment (FBA) is a process of identifying the purpose(s) that a specific behaviour serves for a student. Functional Behaviour Assessments can help to identify likely contributors (setting events, antecedents, and consequences) associated with an inappropriate behaviour and to suggest the underlying causes of that behaviour.

Identification of students who may have special educational needs is a continuous process that determines the educational programming, services, and related supports for that student to be successful.

Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion provides students with the most enabling and least restrictive environment to meet their individual learning needs, including meaningful participation and interaction with others. Inclusion refers not merely to setting but to specific instruction and support for students with special needs in classrooms.

An **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is a documented plan of action designed to address the student's special needs and is based on information which provides the basis for intervention strategies. It outlines the educational program for a student as determined by a school based team. An IEP describes individualized long term annual goals; short term goals or specific behavioural objectives; special resources required; suggested instructional materials; methods and strategies; measures for tracking achievement; IEP review dates; persons responsible for the implementation of the IEP including parents; and parents' written, informed consent for implementation (the *Yukon Education Act, 1990*).

Informed Consent means the parent/legal guardian has been provided with all relevant information. The parent/legal guardian understands and agrees to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought. The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. This includes providing parents/legal guardians with as much information as a reasonable or prudent person

would want to know before making a decision or agreeing to an assessment. When a child is in the care of the Director of Family and Children's Services, the signature of the social worker (not foster parent) is required as legal guardian.

Integration is one of the major strategies used to achieve inclusion. Integration means students learn with their peers and are provided with the necessary accommodations and adaptations and/or modifications to be successful. The adaptations and/or modifications are determined on an individual basis. The principle of "placement in the most enabling learning environment" applies to the extent to which an individual student is placed in a regular classroom or assigned to an alternate placement.

The **least restrictive and most enabling environment** for a student with special educational needs shall be determined by the school administration in consultation with School Based Team (SBT) and consultants from Student Support Services with focus on the goals of the IEP. In all cases, the regular classroom shall be considered as the first option for the implementation of the IEP.

Life Skills Programming is programming based on functional skills that all individuals need to live, work, and take care of themselves. It often focuses on skills needed for independent living.

Modifications are instructional and assessment-related decisions made to accommodate a student's educational needs that consist of individualized learning goals and outcomes different than prescribed learning outcomes of a course or subject.

A **Parent** of a student, according to the *Yukon Education Act*, means the biological parents, the adoptive parents by custom or otherwise, the person legally entitled to custody, or the persons who usually have the care and control of the student.

Parental involvement means a meaningful partnership between school professionals and parents to develop the student including the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic potential to the extent of his/her abilities to his/her fullest potential. This includes input and informed consent of parents and guardians into the referral, assessment, and program planning processes.

Referral is the process of requesting additional support(s) to ensure that learning activities, strategies and resources are appropriate to the student's strengths and needs. This referral occurs after classroom-based interventions or supports have been determined unsuccessful after a prescribed amount of time.

School Age means the ages during which a person is permitted to enroll in an educational program, from 5 years and 8 months to 21 years of age as at September 1 as defined in *Part 1: Definitions* of the *Yukon Education Act*.

School Based Team is an ongoing collaborative problem-solving unit which assists teachers to develop and implement instructional and/or management strategies. The Team coordinates resources for students with special educational needs within the school. The School Based

Team consists of an administrator and other school personnel. Others, such as specialist teachers or Student Support Services consultants, may be invited members at the discretion of the chair of the School Based Team.

School Completion Certificate is issued when a student on a modified program has achieved the goals of his/her Individual Education Plan. It is not a Dogwood Graduation Certificate.

Student Learning Plan (StLP) is a document that identifies short-term or ongoing adaptations that assist the student to achieve the prescribed learning outcomes of the course(s) or program.

Transition Planning is the process that involves the student, parents, professionals, receiving school and staff and community agencies to enable students to prepare for and successfully make changes. This involves preparation, implementation and evaluation in order to prepare the student to make major transitions during his/her life – from home or pre-school to school; from class to class; from school to school; from school to post-secondary, community or work situations.

V. References

Websites and Online Resources:

A parent's Guide to Response to Intervention (RTI)

National Center for Learning Disabilities. www.dyslexia-ca.org

Actualizing a Needs-based Model to Support Student Achievement.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. 2011.

<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/Actualizing-a-Needs-Based-Model-to-Support-Student-Achievement>

Everyone belongs in our schools: A Parent's Handbook on Inclusive Education.

B.C. Association for Community Living. July 2012.

http://www.bcacl.org/sites/default/files/Web_Final_Incl_Ed_Manual.pdf

My Child Needs Intensive Supports: Where to now?

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.

<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/my-child-needs-intensive-supports>

Parent Involvement Toolkit

People for Education. Toronto, Ontario.

<http://www.peopleforeducation.ca>

Reporting on Student Progress in Yukon Schools. Yukon Education website. December 2011.

Supporting Student Success: Working Together in BC Public Schools Handbook.

BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils. 2006.

http://bccpac.bc.ca/sites/default/files/supporting_student_success.pdf

Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School.

Manitoba Education. Citizen and Youth Division. 2004.

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/parent/pdf/workingtogether.pdf>

Yukon Department of Education Appeal Tribunal Procedures and Operations

http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/Education_Appeal_Tribunal_Procedures_and_Operations_Policy.pdf

Yukon First Nations Parent Information Book. 2008.
<http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/firstnations/pdf/yfneac.pdf>

Handbooks and Written Texts:

Actualizing a Needs Based Model to Support Student Achievement.
Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. 2011.

Autism Spectrum Disorder – A Yukon Guide to Services. 2006.

Building Student Success in B.C.'s Public Schools: A Guide for Parents.
Catherine Abraham and Joyce Gram. 2007.

Individual Education Plans: A Guide for Parents
Catherine Abraham and Joyce Gram. Produced by the authors in collaboration with the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils. 2010.

The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs. Alberta Education. 2003.

Northwest Territories Student Support Plans: Guidelines for Development and Teacher Resource Kit. Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, 2006.

Northwest Territories Program Support Guide: Programming for Student Success. Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment. 2008.

Northwest Territories Individual Education Plans: Teacher Resource Kit. 2006.

Parent and School Partnerships: Making it Work.
Yellowknife Association for Community Living

Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning. B.C. School Superintendents' Association. B.C. Ministry of Education. 2002.

Services for Persons With disABILITIES: A Yukon Guide Book.
Yukon Council on Disability. 2011.

School Support Services: Procedures and Guidelines. Yukon Education. June 2012.

Supporting Student Needs: Individualized Needs-Based Response in Action. Yukon Education Student Support Services. 2013.

Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs in School. Manitoba Education, Citizens and Youth. 2004.

Yukon Education Act. 1990

Yukon schools' newsletters to parents

VI. Supporting Organizations

In addition to the supports and programs offered through Yukon Education and schools, these Yukon organizations offer support to parents, children and youth. Presentation on this page is for information only and does not necessarily mean endorsement and/or recommendation from Yukon Education (although in many cases we work in partnership with these organizations).

Non-governmental and private agencies:

AUTISM YUKON

503 B Steele Street
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2E1
Phone: (867) 667-6406
Fax: (867) 667-6408
info@autismyukon.org
Email: executive@autismyukon.org
Website: www.autismyukon.org

BRINGING YOUTH TOWARD EQUALITY (BYTE)

2-407 Ogilvie Street
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2S5
Phone: (867) 667-7975
Fax: (867) 393-2112
Email: bytenow@yukonyouth.com
Website: www.yukonyouth.com

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB – WHITEHORSE

6209 - 6th Avenue
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 5X9
Phone: (867) 393-2824
Email: sidedoor@northwestel.net

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CDC)

1000 Lewes Boulevard,
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone: (867) 456-8182;
Toll Free: 1-866-835-8386
Fax: (867) 393-6374
E-mail: info@cdcyukon.ca Website: www.cdcyukon.ca

CHALLENGE – DISABILITY RESOURCE GROUP

1148 - 1st Avenue
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1A6
Phone: (867) 668-4421
Fax: (867) 667-4337
Email: rick.goodfellow@ccva.ca

CITY OF WHITEHORSE**Parks and Recreation**

Phone: (867) 668-8325
Fax: (867) 668-8324
Email: parks&rec@city.whitehorse.yk.ca
Website: www.city.whitehorse.yk.ca

FAMILY LITERACY CENTRE

2nd Floor, Canada Games Centre
Whitehorse, Yukon
www.yukonliteracy.ca/flc.htm

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME SOCIETY YUKON (FASSY)

4141B 4th Avenue
Whitehorse
Y1A 6K8
Phone: (867)-393-4948
Email: executive.director@fassy.org
Website: <http://www.fassy.org/our-team/>

FREEDOM TRAILS THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION

PO Box 20054
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 7A2
Phone: (867) 633-5911
Fax: (867) 633-5911
Email: ftrails@ajco.ca

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF YUKON (LDAY)

107 Main Street
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 1A7
Phone: (867) 668-5167
Fax: (867) 668-6504
Email: ldayoffice@northwestel.net
Website: <http://www.ldayukon.com/>

MANY RIVERS COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

4071-4th Ave
Whitehorse Y1A 1H3
Phone: (867) 667-2970
Fax: (867) 633-3557
Website: <http://www.manyrivers.yk.ca>

PEOPLE FIRST SOCIETY OF YUKON

PO Box 31478
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 6K8
Yukon Association for Community Living Office,
Yukon Inn Plaza, Whitehorse
Phone: (867) 667-4606
Fax: (867) 668-8169
Email: peoplefirstyukon@hotmail.com
Website: www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

SKOOKUM JIM FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

3159 3rd Avenue
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 1G1
Phone: (867) 633-7680
Fax: (867) 668-4460
Email: friends@northwestel.net
Website: www.skookumjim.com

TEEGATHA 'OH ZHEH

108C Copper Road,
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2Z6
Phone: (867) 668-4471
Fax: (867) 633-3128
Email: toz@teegathaohzheh.com

YUKON ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LIVING (YAACL)

Suite G, Yukon Inn Plaza,
Box 31478
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 6K8
Phone: (867) 667-4606
Fax: (867) 668-8169
Email: yaclwhse@northwestel.net

YUKON COUNCIL ON disAbility

4194-B 4th Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1J8
Phone: (867) 668-6703
Fax: (867) 393-4992
Email: yukoncod@northwestel.net Website: www.ycod.yk.ca

YUKON SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Sport Yukon Building,
4061 - 4th Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H1
Phone: (867) 668-6511
Fax: (867) 667-4237
Email: specialolympics@sportyukon.com

**YUKON COLLEGE LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTRE SUPPORT
SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Yukon College
PO Box 2799
500 College Drive,
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 5K4
Phone: (867) 668-8785
Fax: (867) 668-8814
Email: lassist@yukoncollege.yk.ca
Website: www.yukoncollege.yk.ca

YUKON LEARN SOCIETY

107 Main Street
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2A7
Phone: (867) 668-6280
Toll free 1-888-668-6280
Fax: (867) 633-4576
Email: learn@yukonlearn.com
Website: www.yukonlearn.com

YUKON LITERACY COALITION

Suite 207, 101 Main Street,
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2K8
Phone: (867) 668-6535
Fax: (867) 668-6518
Email: communication.literacy@northwestel.net
Website: www.yukonliteracy.ca

Yukon Government:

**Yukon Government Toll Free
Phone Line (in Yukon):
1-800-661-0408**

Box 2703,
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

**Community Adult Services Unit
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

3168 3rd Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone: 667-5674 or 1-800-661-0408 extension 5674
Fax: 393-6278

**Child and Teenage Services (CATS)
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

415 Baxter Street,
Whitehorse, YT
Phone: (867) 667-8227
Toll free 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8227
Fax: (867) 667-8239

**Childcare Services Unit
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

9010 Quartz Road,
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone: (867) 667-3745
Fax: (867) 393-6250

**Chronic Disease and Disability
Benefits Program
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

4th Floor, 204 Lambert Street,
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone: (867) 667-5092
Fax: (867) 393-6486

**Family Supports for Children with Disabilities
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

49B Waterfront Place
Whitehorse YT
Phone: 867- 393-7464
Toll free 1-800-661-0408 ext. 7464

Hearing Services
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
204 - 4114 4th Avenue,
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone (TTD): (867) 667-5913
Fax: (867) 667-5922

Mental Health Services
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
2nd Floor, 4 Hospital Road
Whitehorse, Yukon
Phone: (867) 667-8346
Fax: (867) 393-8372

Youth Justice
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
305 Lambert Street
Whitehorse, YT
Phone: (867) 667-3610
Toll-free in Yukon: 1-800=661-0408 ext. 3610
Fax: (867) 667-3620